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 16th March 2017

Dear XXX

**Understanding NEETS: Individual and Institutional Determinants of Youth Inactivity in the UK, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Japan**

The University of Oxford’s Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE), as part of a consortium led by the University of Maastricht, is undertaking a three-year comparative study of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The UK strand of the research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

For the scoping phase of the research, the insights and perceptions of key policymakers across the UK are being sought. We would therefore welcome the opportunity to arrange an interview with yourself and/or another representative from XXXX, which would be used to identify any specific issues and data sources, which would provide relevant information. Following these discussions, case studies of each of the four UK countries will be developed, and quantitative analysis of the Labour Force Survey and Understanding Society will be undertaken.

Attached please find a project information sheet, which provides an overview of the research, and outlines why we would like to interview you.

I look forward to hearing from you. If you have any queries or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Yours sincerely,

Professor Ewart Keep

Director,

Centre on Skills, Knowledge & Organisational Performance​

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**Understanding NEETS: Individual and Institutional Determinants of Youth Inactivity in the UK, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Japan**

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

**Background and funding**

The University of Oxford’s Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE), as part of a consortium led by the University of Maastricht, has successfully secured funding from the Open Research Area (ORA) for the Social Sciences to undertake a comparative study of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The ORA is an agreement between the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, UK), Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANC, France), Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, Germany) and the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO, Netherlands).

**Study aims**

As well as the SKOPE and Maastricht teams, researchers from the University of Burgundy, the WZB – Berlin Social Science Center, Germany and Doshisha University, Japan will participate in the study. It commenced in June 2016 and will finish in May 2019. Quantitative analysis and longitudinal case studies will address the following key research questions:

* What are the patterns of NEET?
* What are the causes of NEET?
* To what extent can (a) individual characteristics, and (b) countries’ institutions and policies, and the interactions between them explain the probability that young people aged between 16-29 years make transitions into and out of NEET status?
* What are the consequences of NEET?

**The UK strand entails an in-depth study of the NEET phenomenon across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, comprising:**

* Longitudinal Data Analysis to determine the characteristics of young people who become NEET, the determinants of their NEET duration, and their subsequent destinations. Particular areas of interest are: the distinction between economically active and inactive status within the NEET populations; gender differences; and the propensity of those who are NEET to (re)enter education, employment or training (EET);
* Policy appraisal of NEET early intervention programmes, re-integration strategies and active labour market policies for the young unemployed, and
* An exploration of the proportions of young people who have ‘unknown’ destination status and the variations that exist between localities.

To ensure maximum effectiveness of findings for policies and to facilitate high quality dissemination of results to policy-makers, the project team have formed an international Policy Advisory Board of policy-makers in strategic positions within the OECD, the EU, and the governments of participating countries.

**Your participation in the study**

You have been asked to participate in an interview as you are a member of a key network of UK policy makers. We have identified you as being able to help provide information on policy and initiatives targeting NEET individuals.

It is your decision to take part in this study and you can decide to stop participating at any time. We may ask you to provide a reason for withdrawing from the study for research purposes. You will not have to answer questions that you do not wish to answer.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. Once signed, you will be interviewed for approximately one hour. During the interview, you will be asked a series of questions pertaining to the NEET issue and the interview will be audio recoded. Any data collected may be anonymised and used as part of a research report, academic and/or practitioner oriented publications. Every effort will be made to protect your anonymity, and the anonymity of any data collected during the interview.

**Has this study been reviewed?**

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

**Contact information to voice any concerns or complaints regarding the study:**

Should you have a concern about any aspect of this project, please speak to Dr. Emily Murphy [Tel: 01 865 611030] (emily.murphy@education.ox.ac.uk) [or Prof. Sue Maguire, sm2578@bath.ac.uk] who will do their best to answer your query. They should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how they intend to deal with it.

If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford (using the contact details below) who will seek to resolve the matter in a reasonably expeditious manner:

Chair, **Social Sciences & Humanities Inter-Divisional Research Ethics Committee**; E-mail: ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk. Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD.

If you wish to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Professor Ewart Keep, **Director of SKOPE**, e-mail: ewart.keep@education.ox.ac.uk; Address: Department of Education, University of Oxford, Department of Education,15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY, UK.

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**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**STUDY: Understanding NEETS: Individual and Institutional Determinants of Youth Inactivity in the UK, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Japan**

**RESEARCHER CONTACT DETAILS:**
Professor Ewart Keep,
Director, SKOPE, Department of Education, University of Oxford,
15 Norham Gardens, Oxford, OX2 6PY.

TELEPHONE: 01865 274045

E-MAIL: ewart.keep@education.ox.ac.uk

**DECLARATION**

I the interviewee, confirm that:

1. I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.
2. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I might have about the study and have received satisfactory answers or the additional information I required.
3. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, and will be asked for the reasons for my withdrawal.
4. I understand that this research project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Oxford’s Central University Research Ethics Committee.
5. I consent to being audio recorded.
6. I understand how data from my interview will be stored, who will have access to them, and what will happen to these data at the end of the project.
7. I understand that the research will be written up for use by practitioner, policy and academic audiences, and how data from this research will be published and archived.
8. I understand how to raise any concerns or complaints about this research project.
9. I understand that in this project and all future works using this interview, quotations will be anonymised unless I have been asked and specifically given permission for them to be attributed to me.
10. I consent to participate in this research, for notes and audio recordings of the interview to be taken, and hereby consign to the researcher all copyright in my contribution for use in all work stemming from this project and future projects.

*If you do not wish to assign your copyright to the researcher, or wish to limit public access to your contribution, please state these conditions here*: ……………………….…………………………………………………………………………

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Signed (Participant):……………………………………………………………………………………

Print Name:…………………………………………………………………………………………

Date:………………………

Signed (Researcher):……………………………………………………………………………………

Print Name:…………………………………………………………………………………………

Date:………………………

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**INTERVIEW DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Understanding NEETS: Individual and Institutional Determinants of Youth Inactivity in the UK, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Japan**

**Introduction**

* Interview length approx. 60 minutes
* Consent / recording (which can be stopped at any time)
* Confidentiality
* Do not need to answer every question

**About the respondent and their organisation**

**1** Personal and organisational information

* Name and job title
* Role and their responsibilities within their organisation
* Department – overview of responsibilities
* Role of government department in NEET policy development and programmes/initiatives targeted at the NEET population
* Extent to which responsibilities for the NEET agenda are growing/diminishing
* Extent to which responsibilities complement or overlap with other UK government departments and agencies
* Cooperation and co-production with other UK government departments to plan and deliver NEET strategies and interventions

**Understanding young people who are NEET**

**2** Respondent’s understanding of the terminology around NEET:

* Definitions of NEET
* Definitions of the economically active and inactive within the NEET group
* Age profile: PROMPT for feedback on the use of the term ‘NEET’ to an expanded age range (to 29 years and 30+)

**Profile of the aged 16-24 (and to 29) NEET group**

**3** Who is NEET?

* Gender
* Age
* Socioeconomic status
* Ethnicity
* Disability
* Education achievement
* NEET ‘churn’
* Trends
* Tracking - who does what and how often?

I**nterventions and initiatives to support NEET/Unemployed Groups**

**4 Funding**

* Sources
* Priorities
* Adequacy
* Sustainability
* Future planning

**5 Target Groups**

* All NEET categories
* Unemployed
* Inactive
* Area based approach
* Specific age groups
* Other

**6 Approach**

*(The four types of intervention may need to be described in detail, see appendix for definitions)*

* Strategic
* Preventative
* Reintegration
* Active labour market policies

**7 Delivery**

* Identifying and securing contact with eligible young people
* Barriers to participation
* Length of programme(s)/intervention(s)
* Description of intervention(s)
* Size of programme(s)/initiative(s)

**8 Outcomes**

* Desired outcomes
* Actual outcomes
* Dropout rates and reasons for dropout
* Description of how programme effectiveness/performance is measured

**9 Adequacy of NEET interventions**

* Feedback on quality, quantity and scale of local/national interventions to support NEET/unemployed groups
* Evaluation/impact of existing provision
* Gaps in support/intervention
* Examples of other types of local initiatives (may not be formal programmes or interventions, but support and advice)
* Suggestions of interventions/support needed for NEET group at local (country) /national (UK) level
* Requirements for co-production/co-working between government departments/agencies
* Future plans, priorities and funding streams

**Data**

**10** Statistical and resource evidence on the NEET group

* Data collection methods, frequency and responsibility for data collection
* Local sources of data
* Data sharing practices - PROBE for use of other data sources e.g DWP (NOMIS) and LFS
* Accuracy of local/national data on NEET and unemployed groups
* Scale and trends relating to the ‘unknown’ population
* Data collection/analysis on the following items:

 - psychosocial (e.g. levels of young people’s self-confidence/self esteem)

 - household/co-residence (e.g. practical help received from parents/others)

 - education ‘aspiration’ (e.g. importance of doing well)

 - parent’(s)’ educational/work background

 - sources of support available and taken up by young people/parents

 - young people’s caring responsibilities

 - young people’s health limitations (physical and mental)

 - post code/areas

***Finally, we would welcome your cooperation and assistance in planning and undertaking a country specific case study on young people in the NEET group and policy responses. This will involve:***

* ***visits to relevant departments, agencies and organisations;***
* ***agreeing access to relevant datasets and resources, and***
* ***collecting evidence on published data, research and evaluation outputs***

***The timescale for undertaking the case studies is between March and December 2017, with a proposed follow-up visit in 2018***

**Thank you for your time and willingness to take part in the research.**

**Do you have any questions?**

**Appendix: Definitions**

***Types of policy intervention***

*Strategic level responses* – policies which are coordinated within an overall framework

*Preventative strategies* – early interventions which are designed to reduce the likelihood of dropout from EET at a later stage.

*Reintegration strategies* – targeted at young people who have already dropped out of EET.

*Active labour market policies (ALMPs)* – policies which are intended to stimulate the demand for young people in the labour market, usually by offering wage/training subsidies or tax/NI breaks to employers.