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| **Title of project:** | Challenges and opportunities in the 14-19 skills system in Northern Ireland: An exploratory study with key stakeholders. |
| **Chief Investigator:** | **Dr Ben Harper** |
| **Study No:** |  |
| **Contact details:** | ben@pivotalppf.org , info@pivotalppf.org  |

**Participant information sheet**

Study title: **Challenges and opportunities in the 14-19 skills system in Northern Ireland: An exploratory study with key stakeholders.**

Ethics approval reference: NNXDFF

1. ***What is Pivotal?***

Pivotal is an independent think tank that aims to help improve public policy in Northern Ireland. Pivotal is independent of government and has no political alignment. Pivotal was established to promote greater use of evidence and research in policy making in Northern Ireland and to engage a wider range of people in public policy debate. We complete research to explore the economic and social challenges facing Northern Ireland, for example low productivity, under-investment in infrastructure and climate change.

Pivotal is led by Director Ann Watt who has over twenty years’ experience within the Civil Service. The team includes a senior administrator, a research assistant and research manager, Dr Ben Harper. Ben has over ten years’ experience of completing research using qualitative and quantitative methods in NHS, social care and community settings. Further information about Pivotal may be obtained on our website, [www.pivotalppf.org.uk](http://www.pivotalppf.org.uk).

1. ***What is the purpose of this research?***

This research aims to better understand the skills and training issues in Northern Ireland, whereby there is a shortage of some jobs and skills and an oversupply of other roles.

Our research wishes to speak with key people involved in skills and training. These include: young people, parents/carers, teachers with careers education and advisory responsibilities and employers.

You may be invited to take part in an online questionnaire or an online interview / focus groups. We wish to ask you about the following key areas:

* *Attitudes to skills and training programmes*
* *Factors influencing decision making*
* *Young people’s understanding of the labour market*
* *Careers advice and experience*
* *Essential skills training*
1. **Why have I been invited to take part?**

This research is interested in addressing a gap in previous research in an attempt to develop solutions to the skills deficits in Northern Ireland. We wish to include important people who access and develop skills and education training. These four groups include:

* Young people
* Parents/carers
* Teachers with careers education and advisory responsibilities
* Employers
1. **What does taking part in this study mean for me?**

You may be asked to take part in an online questionnaire or an online interview / focus group. You will be asked questions related to:

* *Attitudes to skills and training programmes*
* *Factors influencing decision making*
* *Young people’s understanding of the labour market*
* *Careers advice and experience*
* *Essential skills training*

You do not have to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable with.

1. **How long will it take?**

The online questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes and the interview/focus group may take between 30-45 minutes.

1. **What are the risks of taking part?**

There are no known risks associated with taking part. We will not ask you any personal questions, for example questions related to your mental health, personal relationships etc. the question format is based on your experience of accessing education and your solutions to the skills deficits problems we experience in Northern Ireland.

1. **Can I withdraw from the study?**

Being involved in the study is completely voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any period. Please contact Dr Ben Harper (ben@pivotalppf.org) who can remove your data.

1. **How will you keep my information confidential?**

There will be no identifying information stored about your responses. This form will be stored separately to the questionnaire and interview data. The research team will not use your name, address or any other identifying information.

During an interview/focus group confidentiality may be broken if you disclose something that indicates that you or someone else is at risk of harm. In this instance we will always try and discuss this issue with you directly before we contact an outside party (e.g. GP).

1. **How will my data be stored?**

My data will be stored on a secure, password protected, online database ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)). This data based is fully compliant with GDPR regulations. Data is not shared with any external parties outside of the Pivotal research team.

1. **Who can I contact with questions about the study?**

You can contact the Chief Investigator Dr Ben Harper (ben@pivotalppf.org). If for some reason you are unhappy with the communication with Dr Harper, you may contact Ann Watt, Director (ann@pivotalppf.org).