

NEXT STEPS for the *NEXT STEPS* STUDY

The *Next Steps* study that you have been part of for over seven years is changing. Every year since 2004 you have been interviewed for this important study. A very big thank you to you, you've helped make it a great success and the study is considered, both nationally and internationally, to be a unique resource which helps improve young people's services.

The data you have provided has given the Department for Education (DfE), the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) new and unique insights into your lives so we can better understand how we can improve things for the future. If you have been on the study website recently (www.nextstepsstudy.org.uk/) you'll have seen that there is an ever growing reading list of research reports based on your answers from over the years. These research reports have been put to good use in helping formulate new policies.

Public spending is under extreme pressure at the moment. We are now reviewing the study, along with the Economic and Social Research Council (who are the UK's leading agency for research funding and training in economic and social sciences, see www.esrc.ac.uk/ for more information) to see how best the study can continue within our new budgets.

This does not mean it is the end of *Next Steps*, just this phase. There are many researchers across Government and beyond who are very interested in your activities no matter what you are doing. Your information is still extremely valuable to us. I am approaching you now to ask if you are happy for us to keep hold of your contact details so that we can contact you for future research purposes. Future research may include further interviews or your progress being tracked through other data sources and then linked into your details in *Next Steps* (like we have done previously with your school exam results etc).

In addition, if you have previously given permission for us to link your survey data to administrative data, (such as your exam records or tax and benefit information) we also wish to continue to do this. We would do this for a maximum of 5 years (or until you tell us to stop).

Your contact details will be kept separately from the answers you have given in the study, as they are now. Your details will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act by the authorised research organisation working on behalf of the DfE and will be kept for 5 years. Your details will never be sold on or used for marketing or commercial purposes.

In line with the Data Protection Act, your survey data, including any administrative data which has been linked to your survey data will be kept and used for research purposes. A great deal of data is publicly available, in an anonymised format for researchers to use. Where findings from research are published, they are done so in such a way as not to identify individuals.

If you would like to know more about how we intend to use your data more details including some frequently asked questions can be found at the *Next Steps* website (www.nextstepsstudy.org.uk/). If you do not have access to the internet, we can post

you a copy of this information on request (please contact the *Next Steps* Research Team using the details below). If you have any other outstanding queries or if you would like to let us know that your contact details have changed, please contact the *Next Steps* Research Team.

We would really appreciate it if you would let us keep hold of your details and (where appropriate) continue to link in your administrative data, as this will help keep this study alive and allow us to make the most of the valuable data you have provided so far (as we will be able to track your experiences in later years).

Any future research you would be approached about would be entirely voluntary and would not affect your dealings with DfE, BIS or DWP. However, if you would prefer not to be contacted again in relation to the *Next Steps* study, or you do not want us to continue linking in your administrative data please write to the Next Steps Research Team using the details below and we'll remove your contact details/permission to link from the database.

Please include your reference number when you contact us so we can be sure we remove the correct details. Please contact us by 16th January 2011.

Write:	Next Steps Team TNS-BMRB 6 More London Place London SE1 2QY	Next Steps (Helen Wood) Longitudinal Surveys Team Department for Education Floor 5 2 St Paul's Place, 125 Norfolk Street Sheffield S1 2FJ
Email:	nextstepssurvey@bmr.co.uk	Next.steps@education.gsi.gov.uk
Phone:	0800 0154492	0114 2742438

Please note that if you decide to withdraw from future *Next Steps* research, you may still be invited to participate in other (unrelated) research conducted by the DfE, BIS or DWP.

Once again, thank you for your help to date and I do hope that you continue to be an active part of this important study.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Wood
Department for Education