Career Review

Future of Work Context document July 2021





COVID-19 is endangering workforce skills

COVID-19 has changed the landscape of the working world, bringing mass job losses, huge shifts to remote working and heightened insecurity for many workers across the labour market. Young people have been some of the worst-affected by the crisis facing disrupted educational and economic prospects.

Industry 4.0 brings opportunities for people, communities and businesses

Before the COVID-19 crisis, it was clear that the world of work was changing. We were moving into a fourth industrial revolution, driven by technological disrupters including robotics, big data, the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence. This has significant implications for how we live and work, what skills we require to thrive, and how we learn those skills.

"The speed of change is beyond the skillset of our organisation"

Jackie Archer - Blafour Beattie, in April at SDS Future of Work Living Lab

Scotland re-invented?

Severity of economic impact

Growing pains

Bleak

Accelerated

Bright and bold

- Scotland benefits from a clear and ambitious agenda to build back better, with public, private and third sector working in close collaboration towards a more equal economy and society
- Strong investment from government matched by industry
- Business confidence returns quickly, entrepreneurs exploit new opportunities, business model changes are bedded-in, acceleration of digital transformation is sustained
- Hybrid working the norm, urban business districts and commuter towns being reimagined to support new working patterns

- Strong commitment to build back better, but challenging economy slows down progress and doesn't extend to all. Most vulnerable still left behind. Change is driven by business and communities; government action slowed down by indecisive leadership
- Less funding available, business confidence slow to return, not enough capacity and resources despite appetite to continue changes sparked during crisis. Lots of innovative ideas, but not enough capital to realise quickly
- Technology and green are targets for progress, not enough resources left to also target innovation and progress in undervalued sectors like care
- Inequalities in working arrangements higher skilled are privileged to have more flexibility

Energy for change

- Industry on road to recovery, but still faced with the same issues and trends as before the crisis - automation, ageing population, skills shortages, re-skilling challenges, rising inequality
- Tight budgets, do more with less agenda. Indecision and inertia in decisionmaking at government level, less ambitious recovery in terms of progress beyond restoring pre-crisis status quo
- Pace of change in industry back to pre-crisis levels some leaders forging ahead, many businesses focussing on day to day survival in same business model
- Some flexibility in working arrangements remain after lockdown, but largely snap back to pre-crisis norms

Deja vu

- 'Back to normal' not achieved, old issues entrenched, indecision from leadership, lack of capital, business confidence stays low long-term
- Conflict between government and business agendas and priorities leads to an impasse and hampers recovery and progress
- Some sectors never fully recover, and new sectors do not emerge in time to avoid long-term job shortages
- Government support not enough to go beyond staving off the worst. Indecision and lack of clear recovery agenda. Most re-skilling and rebuilding of industries left to private sector - inequality worsens



We were facing urgent challenges before COVID-19



"The half-life of a job skill is about 5 years" Critical thinking and problem-solving top the list of skills employers believe will grow in prominence in the next five years.





Few managers and leaders believe their organisations are ready to take on the challenges brought by digitisation

Only 9% have leaders with skills needed to thrive in digital economy

47% of employers say that their organisations are deeply involved in automation projects, using AI and robotics



The future of work is now

