Future risk

Impact of work on employee health, safety and wellbeing

A summary
February 2018

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Foreword by British Safety Council

In its 60-year history, the British Safety Council has always made sure it has the most up to date information on the risks that people experience at, or bring to, work. To argue for change, evidence must be at the heart of everything we do and, in the context of rapid changes to how we live and work, we are pleased to see 'Future risk: Impact of work on employee health, safety and wellbeing,' by RobertsonCooper.

Mike Robinson FCA
Chief Executive
British Safety Council

"This report will help us influence change for the better"

Some commentators are calling this period an Industrial Revolution 4.0, but however we categorise it, radical change in the workplace will have to be reflected in radical change in the British Safety Council if we are to stay relevant. This report will help us identify how we can influence these changes for the better to enhance, not undermine, our health, safety and wellbeing.

We know Great Britain has changed into a mostly service economy since the Health and Safety at Work Act was introduced in 1974, and that skilled and knowledgeable people should be at the heart of the modern British economy. We also know that this economic change and our regulatory framework has driven a large reduction in accidents and safety issues. It is a very positive story and one our country can be rightly proud of.

However, with today's 12,000 deaths a year from work-related lung disease largely stemming from historic ignorance about certain hazardous substances, this valuable report from RobertsonCooper will enable us – and others - to prepare for future risks, for example the potential breathing risks associated with new materials like nanotechnology, and mitigate them.

There are many other consequences for our health, safety and wellbeing covered in this report. Some are positive, for example how new technology can give us more flexibility in our work that can improve our sense of wellbeing. But whether it's 24/7 working, the platform or 'gig' economy, or the drive towards automation, our mental and physical health, even our very sense of self, is at risk. Safety has not gone away either in the future world of work, with the physical risks of working in close proximity with robots calling for new thinking in design, training and regulation.

RobertsonCooper have produced a report that tells us about how the economy is changing and the state of the research on the risks we can expect to face. It also gives all of us a map to plot a course towards safer, healthier and happier work in the future.

Foreword by RobertsonCooper

Sir Cary Cooper CBE
Founding Director
RobertsonCooper and
Good Day at Work

*Professor of Organisational
Psychology and Health*
University of Manchester

Over the last decade, we've seen significant changes in the nature of the workplace and workforce, and they're not showing any signs of stopping. As such, the topic of the 'future of work' is one that, naturally, is very much growing and dominating the conversation amongst health, safety and wellbeing professionals. Many industry think-tanks, conferences and thought leadership pieces are centred on the future of work and what that could look like – yet there has been less of a focus on what this might mean for our health, safety and wellbeing.

Organisations, big and small, now know that their competitive edge depends on engaged, healthy and proactive employees and that cultures that promote this kind of environment will deliver to the bottom line, as well as sustaining the health of their employees. There is a wealth of research – some of which I have led – that demonstrates the benefits that focusing on employee health and wellbeing can deliver for businesses. We now also see that 45% of companies have a clearly defined wellbeing strategy (REBA, 2017), enabling them to ensure their efforts are delivering the right results for them.

But health and wellbeing are by no means at the heart of current working practice and culture. The last five years has seen increases in stress-related illness and presenteeism, which have had an impact on productivity, talent retention and attraction. In 2016 only 30% of companies had a wellbeing strategy, so whilst we're moving in the right direction, there's still progress to be made.

My concern is that companies are gearing themselves up to focus on health and wellbeing for the here and now, rather than setting themselves up to be ready for the complexities of the future. And by that, I mean, are businesses creating a culture that promotes wellbeing, with managers who create positive work environments and employees who take responsibility for their own wellbeing? We know that work is changing which is why there is much conversation about the future of work but we know less about the risks this might bring to the health, wellbeing and safety of employees, so it's a challenge for businesses to prepare for this.

"My concern is that companies are focussing on the here and now, rather than getting ready for the complexities of the future"

The future of work, at least for the next 10 or 20 years, was set by the recession. It has had a prolonged impact that has created a workplace where there are fewer people doing more work, working longer hours and feeling intrinsically insecure. We're seeing more contractors and people on short term contracts with the rise of the gig economy, an increase in technology creating an 'always on' culture, an ageing workforce and, ultimately, a very different psychological contract between employers and employees for the future.

As such, we are seeing loyalty between employers and employees decreasing, which means that retaining healthy, high performing employees is even more important. Work has a future, but one that will provide individuals with the opportunity to do things differently, which brings both risks and opportunities to the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce.

My experience over the last forty years has been about working with organisations to develop a culture that prioritises employee wellbeing as a key driver for increased performance. Organisations of the future need to trust their employees and manage by praise and reward – if employees are clear about what is required of them and are achieving their objectives, why does it matter where, when or how they deliver their work?

I'm pleased that the British Safety Council and RobertsonCooper are focusing on these complex issues and shining the spotlight on the importance of the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees in these changing times. This report brings together the latest thinking and insights and I'm looking forward to being part of the critical conversations and action it encourages.

Recommendations

The literature review has confirmed that we are living through fundamental and potentially disruptive change to how we live and work. There are a number of recommendations we can now make to government, business, trade unions and educators to ensure that we will be better prepared to face any health, safety and wellbeing risks that are likely follow these changes.

"Organisations of the future need to trust their employees and manage by praise and reward. If employees are achieving their objectives what does it matter where, when or how they deliver their work?"

1 Promote good work and better-quality jobs

Though change is inevitable, how we respond to the changing world of work is not. Government and businesses in particular need to make sure they have the right policies to ensure that work is safe, healthy and rewarding. The state of our children's and workers' mental health in the UK continues to be a concern, and there is strong evidence to show that good work makes for healthier and more productive workers. New technology can do a lot to help by giving workers more tools for self-determination, and enable older workers to stay fitter for longer. We urge that businesses, trade unions and others share their experience of good work and work design as the UK Government implements its Industrial Strategy.

2 Build resilience

The ability of workers to cope with the mental pressure of a changing world of work, including increased collaboration between workers and intelligent machines and robotics, is going to be a key attribute in the future. Worker health and wellbeing demands it and, at a macro level, if we are to have a sustainable and productive economy, then we must do more to help workers build their resilience. Government needs to look at incentives (such as tax breaks) for employers to introduce health and wellbeing programmes, schools should include resilience and wellbeing in their curricula and employers should test innovative approaches and wellbeing programmes in consultation with workers and trade unions.

Ensure education is relevant and forward thinking **3**

There is a risk that changes to the world of work could leave 'educators' behind. If we create a more insecure and inexperienced workforce (who are therefore more likely to suffer injury or ill-health), risk education before work along with induction and training at work will become even more important. Schools and training bodies need to focus on both 'soft-skills' such as collaboration, creativity and leadership (workers can take these skills with them as they change jobs, these skills are less prone to automation and will boost resilience) and skills associated with new technology, such as working in collaboration with intelligent machines and robots. Occupational safety and health professionals, as well as Safety Representatives and HR professionals, should include in their development such training, with a larger emphasis on how to reduce 'stressors' and promote wellbeing and resilience. What's key to the ability to do this is adaptability; educators are required to have a flexible mindset focused on supporting individuals, from school education through to workforce development, to thrive in an ever-changing environment.

Keep the regulatory system up to date **4**

Changes to the world of work presents challenges for how our legal and regulatory systems operate. With working networks, including between humans and machines, sometimes operating across borders, there is a question about where ownership of the risk lies – who should take responsibility if something goes wrong? This also leads us to a question about liability when things go wrong. The cost of ill-health remains high, with PWC estimating in 2013 that sickness absence costs UK businesses an estimated £29bn (*The Rising Cost of Absence*). As contracts between employers and workers become more diffuse (where people in the 'gig' economy are often not classified as workers), businesses might increasingly avoid the costs of sickness absence or employer's liability insurance. Government should do more through its Industrial Strategy to enable gig-workers to take certain minimal social protections and rights with them, wherever they work. Good work must be for all.

Extend the understanding of the future risks **5**

The report has highlighted some of the sweeping changes to work we are facing. It is vital that determining the risks of the future is a key role for the research community and people practitioners. Existing research strongly indicates that there needs to be a greater emphasis on soft skills such as leadership, communication and innovation to face these future risks. However, research on the risks of new technologies, new materials and new ways of working is quite thin in places. For example, research into the risks associated with real world applications of nanomaterials and the impact on mental and physical health of those people working as co-bots would contribute to a more coherent view of current and future risks to worker health, safety and wellbeing.

Research Summary

The world of work is rapidly changing. With this comes the opportunity for improved wellbeing and equality, but also new risks for health, safety and wellbeing.

"We've focussed on what the future of work might look like. Yet there has been less of a focus on what this might mean for our health, safety and wellbeing"

The future landscape of work
This report provides a succinct overview of the landscape of work; focusing on the likely changes that employers and employees alike will experience over the next two decades, before exploring the risks that these changes may present for the health, safety and wellbeing of the workforce. Finally, we explore what this may mean for businesses, trade unions, education and regulators.

The future of work is a topic that has gained momentum in recent years amongst practitioners and thought leaders working in health, safety and wellbeing. People are living and working for longer, tasks are becoming automated and the nature and location of work are rapidly shifting. With these significant changes on the horizon, and many already taking shape, the risks associated with work are changing too; and for that reason, it is vital to understand and respond effectively to these new challenges.

This research report is the culmination of a literature review carried out between October and December 2017 on this topic. This first part of the report summarises the research and key findings, and Part 2 provides a more detailed literature synthesis.

The future of work requires us to consider some huge questions about the nature of work going forward. Will jobs still require people? Where is "work"? What will be the relationship between employers and employees?

The limited research that is available highlights four main themes which capture the future landscape of work. Technology dominates much of the insights on the topic, but there is much more to it than technology alone as we explore in the following section, providing an overview of these key themes. More detail on the research behind these themes can be found in Part 2 of the report.

Research Summary

"Predictions indicate that 11 million jobs may become surplus in the next 20 years"

Technological advances

The research is heavily weighted towards the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and job automation, looking at whether – and how – tasks that humans perform will be replaced by machines. It also centres on real-time technology creating an 'always on' culture creating difficulties for people to integrate their work and life. Areas explored in part 2 include:

- **AI and job automation:** Automation is already a core part of work in industries such as the automotive and electronics industries, but predictions from the Health and Safety Executive indicate that by 11 million jobs may become surplus in the next 20 years

- **Co-bots and collaboration:** In industries where automation is already well adopted, it is now becoming less essential, putting manpower back onto the line – but requiring collaboration with machines as the collaborative robot, or co-bot

- **Immersive technologies:** The rise of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR)

- **Information and communication technologies (ICT):** How technology that facilitates a modern way of working has led to an 'always on' culture in some professions

- **The internet of things (IoT) and cyber security:** As the number of devices connected to the internet is expected to grow to anywhere between 20 – 300 billion in next five years, what does this mean for the security of these devices?

Labour market – demand

Research suggests that atypical forms of work are increasing. At the same time, there is uncertainty around demand for labour from Brexit and its aftermath. Areas explored in part 2 include:

- **Increase in gig economy and decrease in the stability of work:** As the number of contractors and freelancers rises and is projected to continue rising, the job market is likely to become more fluid and agile, changing the balance of power between employees and employers

- **Skill requirements:** Will employers of the future require the skills of now? As the 'gig workforce' grows, this means a change in skills will be required, as well as how people develop these skills

- **Economic uncertainty:** In the UK and Europe, Brexit creates economic ambiguity and the impact of that is far from understood.

"The number of physical devices connected to the internet is expected to grow by up to 300 billion in the next five years"

Labour market – supply

A range of factors will affect labour demand. At the same time there are likely to be changes in labour supply. Areas explored in part 2 include:

- **Demographics:** People are working for longer as the state pension age rises
- **Location:** Focusing on how housing has not kept pace with digital/industrial developments, leading to rising house prices and the geographical definition of 'work' changing
- **Skill shortages:** How an emphasis on homegrown talent is likely to reinforce the trend of a short-term skills shortage
- **Global shifts:** How resourcing talent online can deliver value for money for businesses for a range of roles.

Environmental changes

Research shows that we are moving towards an "increasingly unstable and unsustainable world" that will impact the supply chains of all businesses. Areas explored in part 2 include:

- **Climate change and international instability:** How rising global temperatures will impact how and where we work in the future
- **Resource scarcity:** Why current consumption levels of natural resources may create an unsustainable future.

Research Summary

A framework for considering risk

In this section, we set out the risks that these factors which epitomise the future of work could pose to the health, safety and wellbeing of employees. To do this, we have used RobertsonCooper's six Essentials framework. More detail on the risks in each of the six areas is included in part 2.

"We're seeing a rise of the gig economy, an increase in technology creating an 'always on' culture, an ageing workforce and, ultimately, a very different psychological contract in the future"

A framework for considering risk

Resources and communication	The gig workforce are likely to require a different kind of training and development, and the introduction of technologies could disrupt work as we know it.
Control	A reduction in the amount of control employees of the future may have, in particular when, where, how and until when they work, ultimately changing the psychological contract between employee and employer.
Balanced workload	The creation of over-engagement with work and the potential for neuroenhancement drugs to become commonplace.
Job security and change	Insecurity encouraging employees to work when they are ill, reinforced by the threat of automation.
Work relationships	The risks for remote workers and how generations will be required to work together.
Job conditions	Organisations may struggle to keep pace with approaches to support employee health and wellbeing, in particular the needs of an ageing workforce and a closer relationship with technology.

"There is a risk of an over-engaged workforce with neuro-enhancement drugs becoming commonplace"

Mitigating risks

Whilst there is research – academic or otherwise – focusing on the future of work and the potential risks this could bring, there is much less research available into what could be done to mitigate these risks. Much of the literature that is available on this topic is from leading think-tanks, based on their experience and knowledge rather than grounded in academia.

The final section of Part 1 concentrates on that, and how businesses, trade unions, education and regulators/governments can act to mitigate the impact these risks may have in the future.

Businesses

Organisations are already starting to take employee health and wellbeing more seriously – REBA (2017) found that the number of organisations with a wellbeing strategy grew 20% in 2017, taking it to 45%. But this is a relatively new move for businesses, as 75% of strategies have been in place for less than three years. The fact that organisations looking at health and wellbeing as a strategic issue is still in its' infancy is likely to be contributing to a lack of sophistication in the approaches taken. Employee assistance programmes (EAP), health screening and discounted gym membership are the top three initiatives on offer, and only a quarter of businesses are measuring the effectiveness of their initiatives.

Clearly, the focus on employee health and wellbeing is going to grow, with predictions that half of those without a strategy will implement one within the next 12 months. But its vital that these are sophisticated approaches and go beyond providing traditional support services like EAPs and health screening. Ensuring that the effectiveness of any work on health and wellbeing is measured and reported is crucial to both enabling organisations to deliver the impact they set out to, and to safeguard budgetary commitments in the future by demonstrating the return on investment to senior stakeholders.

As businesses do focus on health and wellbeing more, they must also take a forward-thinking view in their strategy. The risks and opportunities that strategies are built to tackle now are unlikely to be the same as those of the future, and so a data-driven approach will prove hugely valuable for businesses to ensure they focus on the right areas. As new risks emerge in a constantly changing world of work, organisations will require cutting-edge data to act in a targeted way.

"Flexible working can deliver a range of benefits, including lower home/work conflict and increased job autonomy"

Over the next two decades, it is inevitable that jobs will be designed and redesigned by organisations to meet the challenges they face. The most forward-thinking businesses will build protections into these processes and the changes made, ensuring that they take a balanced view to the associated risks and benefits. A pertinent example of this is flexible working, discussed in the previous section, as a potential risk for the future as the nature and location of work change. Risks could include inescapability of work, a lack of detachment from work, and poorer work relationships (Hislop et al., 2015), however, flexible working can deliver a range of benefits for employees and employers, including lower home/work conflict and increased job autonomy. So, it's important that organisations consider the protections in place to deliver these benefits and mitigate the risks. This could include creating optimal levels of remote working (e.g. 14-15 hours per week; Hislop et al, 2008), positive leader-worker relationships and building high degrees of trust.

Despite the predictions about job automation and AI, the future of work will still need workers. Although some roles may move close to 100% automation, knowledge workers are unlikely to be replaced. This will put an emphasis not only on supporting employees once they are inside organisations (whether as employees or contractors), but also on effective recruitment. In a report looking at the 'competing forces' in the future of work, PWC (2017) highlight the future need for pivotal people – individuals who contribute vast and critical value to their organisation. Workers who perform tasks which automation can't yet – or may never – perform will become more pivotal, meaning that finding and retaining such people will become a challenge for businesses.

In a survey of CEOs, they found that whilst exploring the benefits of automation is already underway for just over half of businesses, increasing the headcount in the next 12 months was also on the agenda for the majority. They highlighted automation as something that would change the future skill needs for their businesses, and as such finding skills like problem-solving, adaptability, collaboration, leadership, creativity and innovation are top of the list.

"Top of the list for skills that are needed in the future will be problem-solving, adaptability, collaboration, leadership, creativity and innovation"

Finding people with these skills may be made easier through the use of Virtual Reality in selection, though. Many employers are now using this to advance their current recruitment and selection processes, and as Gen Zs make up larger proportions of the workforce in the future, such technologies are likely to align with their expectations. Additionally, focusing on creating a compelling Employee Value Proposition (EVP) will be an important step to allow companies to attract the best talent to them.

Retaining such people will be challenging for businesses, too. Looking after people with the key skills required to succeed will be important, and providing them with the flexibility that they are likely to warrant going forward. The shift in the labour supply and demand dynamic – explored earlier in this report – may also mean that reward and benefits will become even more important than they are today, where employees vital to company success are able to negotiate higher rewards more easily.

Finally, there are several factors contributing to an emerging situation where the average age, and working lifetime, are increasing. In the UK, the retirement age is on a gradual rise from 65 to 68 by 2037, and by 2022 there will be 700,000 fewer people aged 16 to 49 in the country. In contrast, 3.7 million more people will be aged between 50 and state pension age. So as elders remain in the workforce, some research suggests the need to retain older workers in order to gain a competitive advantage (Gordon, 2018). As such, companies of the future should support continuous learning and development (Nikolova, Van Ruysseveldt, De Witte & Syroit, 2014) in a bid to create the conditions for lifelong learning (Taylor, 2017).

Trade unions

For many years the trade unions have played an important role in economies, including through their Safety Representatives, to reduce accidents and injury, and promote safer and healthier workplace cultures. If there is a further reduction of their influence on the workplace, it is not clear who or what would replace the role that they play.

"Workers in precarious employment need to be protected and represented"

Membership in trade unions has declined rapidly over the past four decades. In the 1980's, 50% of employees were members of a trade union, and in 2016 this had dropped to 24% (TUC, 2016). The age profile of typical members has also changed considerably, with older workers making up a much higher proportion of members than previously, as two in five union members are over 50.

Yet, TUC also found that one in 10 workers are in 'precarious jobs', including in the gig economy where workers have less access to sick pay, redundancy and job protection, and those on zero-contract hours earning significantly less than typical employees. So, with the trend of people who the TUC would consider in precarious jobs set to continue growing and union membership declining, this raises uncertainty about where future efforts to represent worker health, safety and wellbeing will come from.

The future of the labour market is likely to be fragmented, with increasing individual contributors and lower strength in numbers. Representing workers and creating labour standards for such workers will become an increasing challenge, for regulators and enforcement bodies, but also for unions.

Unions can only operate within the regulations set at a national or international level, and as such may be in a powerless position with decreasing membership numbers – especially amongst younger workers – and outdated regulations that don't match the make-up of the workforce.

However, it is expected that such legislations will change which could strengthen the position of Unions. Taylor (2017) calls for Government legislation, enforcement and strategy for quality work that is fair, decent and has realistic scope for development and fulfilment. The European Commission is currently considering two legislative measures on the protection of rights for those employed on short-term contracts, including the gig economy and zero hours contracts, which may affect the UK depending on how trading continues beyond 2019 and the UK's agreement with the European Union.

The first is the *'Access to Social Security Initiative,'* which looks to ensure similar social protection rights for similar work, regardless of how a person is employed, and the transferability of acquired social protection rights.

"A huge proportion of the workforce of the next two decades are still in education"

The second is the *'Written Statement Directive,'* where all workers, irrespective of their employment status and contract type, are entitled to the same information on their contract of work, and that core labour standards are upheld. This may include rights to contracts with a minimum number of hours set by previous average hours worked, the right to training, notice periods in case of dismissal and access to impartial dispute resolution if required. Clearly, this kind of legislation could have a huge effect on how organisations resource work and treat their employees and workers in the future.

Even as legislations change, unions need to transform too. Membership numbers have been declining and the reasons for that do not all lie with the rising gig economy, which shows the need for transformation, yet the expected rise in the gig economy creates an even bigger need. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) predicts that the number of self-employed workers will soon overtake the number of public sector workers, raising even more questions for the future of unions.

As the balance shifts over time, workers in these so called 'precarious' positions need to be protected and represented, but protection will need to be very different to that of thousands of employees working for one organisation all represented by the same union.

Education

The focus of business and trade unions is employees – those already in work who need to be supported, protected and represented. However, a huge proportion of the workforce of the next two decades are still in education. Whilst – as discussed earlier in this report – what the future of work will entail is still unknown, it's almost certainly going to be different to that of today.

One of the factors that underpin work and workers now is mental health – stress, anxiety and depression is the leading cause of absence from work (HSE, 2016), and despite the best efforts of businesses, work is still a contributor to these problems. But mental health for young people is also a growing concern – rates of depression and anxiety among teenagers have increased 70% in the past 25 years according to RSPH, and so with an already present issue around mental health in the workplace, this is a cause for concern for the future.

The UK government has recognised this as an issue, and a 2017 House of Commons report called for schools to take a 'whole school' approach to embed mental health and wellbeing inside the curriculum and called for its consideration as part of Ofsted inspections. It's vital that schools are funded in a way that enables them to act on such recommendations, given that the report also highlighted that half of all mental illness starts before the age of 15, giving schools a huge responsibility.

"Educating people on how to work with co-bots will be fundamental to their acceptance inside society and workplaces alike"

However, to address the potential risks of the future workforce, education must not be limited to the compulsory education system. As the risks to employee health, safety and wellbeing change, educating employees to create an awareness of these and how to manage for themselves will be important. Yet, health, safety and wellbeing are not solely the responsibility of employers or governments; they must create the right environment for employees to then make the right choices which maximise their health, wellbeing and safety.

As such, part of this education must be on building responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing amongst employees themselves. Understanding their individual risk factors and being educated on how to act on these will become a pre-requisite for all organisations, who must also ensure that they are creating the right conditions for their people to do this.

One key risk factor in the future, which is already coming into play for businesses, is that of employees working with co-bots. Research (Hollinger, 2016) shows that those already working with robotic and collaborative robots would continue to choose to do so, but they are mostly established in industries such as automotive, however as they become more commonplace in other industries, ensuring they are implemented in the right way will be vital.

Educating people on the way to work and interact with co-bots will be fundamental to their acceptance inside society and workplaces alike. It is likely that such training will benefit from utilising Virtual Reality (Matsas, Batras & Vosniakos, 2012).

However, as the relationship between employers and employees changes with a rising gig economy, where the responsibility to provide education and self-development opportunities lies is likely to change. As discussed in the previous section, consideration of the Written Statement Directive means that the right to education and training may soon be extended beyond employees only. Irrespective of that, there may be a responsibility for employers to provide such access, but in a world where automation threatens to replace human input in many jobs, it requires employees themselves to take ownership of their own education and development in order to thrive.

Regulators and governments
A number of references have been made throughout this report to action from regulators and governments. As the nature of work changes though, it's vital that governments and such bodies have a mindset grounded in adaptability. What exactly work will be and look like over the next decade is unknown, and it is impossible to predict what lies ahead. Making linear predictions about the impact that a particular change may have is much more modest, however

"Changes to policy can often be made long after societal impacts are felt by people"

is unlikely to give an accurate representation. So, adaptability to change will be fundamental to success for businesses. This is as much about businesses needing to adapt as it is individuals, who will need to adapt to organisational change, be willing to acquire new skills and experiences, try new tasks and re-train mid-career (PWC, 2017).

Yet businesses can only operate within the frameworks and conditions set for them, so adaptability amongst regulators and governments is of equal importance. Changes in policy can often reach the agenda long after their impact is being felt by society, and once there can take time to be implemented, so in the future there is a need for flexibility as the basis of quicker action. This could include easing the routes to training and retraining, and encouraging and incentivising adaptability and the critical and increasingly valued skills of leadership, creativity and innovation.

One particular area this will be required is around technology developments. The HSE (2016) emphasise the need for guidance, regulation and regulatory frameworks in this area. Another debate that regulators and governments will need to host is around the ethics associated with robotic and autonomous systems, including driverless cars. PWC (2017) emphasise the need for governments and businesses to collaborate in developing a

responsible approach to this, along with policies that govern the impact of technology and automation on jobs.

This collaborative effort between governments, regulators and businesses is not limited to technology however. As the risks to health, wellbeing and safety grow in a somewhat unpredictable fashion, these will continue to negatively impact businesses and in turn GDP. One potential role for the governments in this is to incentivise employers to act to mitigate the risks on health, wellbeing and safety of their workforce. One example of this already taking place in the public sector is the NHS Commissioning for Quality and Innovation (CQUIN) funding, whereby NHS Trusts must demonstrate positive action on health and wellbeing (amongst other areas) to receive parts of their funding from commissioners.

Finally, the role of the government is not limited to those in work – it is likely that the increased use of automation inside some roles, along with increased reliance on technology more generally, will drive unemployment. PWC (2017) suggest that governments could test social safety nets such as universal basic income, recently piloted on 2,000 people in Finland, and identifying new sources of income for citizens.

Conclusion

"**In terms of recruitment, there is a very acute message that if we do not do something pretty quickly we're not going to have a specialist occupational health workforce**"

Professor John Harrison
Council for Work and Health

This report has synthesised the literature to produce a broad landscape of the possible future of work in the UK, with a specific lens on the impact these changes may have on the health, safety and wellbeing of the workforce. A report by the Council for Work and Health (2016) notes that there are insufficient trained professionals able to assist workplaces with these issues, and there will be too few for a considerable time going forward.

It will rest with organisations and employers to work with their people to ensure happy and healthy days at work; as such, the final section of this report suggested ways in which future risks might be tackled. Whilst there may be considerable challenges ahead, there is much that can be anticipated and done to make the future of work a tool for raising the health not only of individual employees, but of communities and society also.

No-one should be injured or made ill at work.

Our mission is to keep people as safe and healthy as possible in their work through education and practical guidance. We look forward to working with you to achieve this goal.

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