

Key Messages

Automation and the Scottish economy:

- The fourth industrial revolution is still in its infancy ... while short-term risks are more obvious, many longer-term opportunities are as yet unimaginable
- To varying degrees opportunities and risks will exist for all firms and sectors
- While Scotland's levels of adoption have historically lagged, we have examples of world class innovation and research in Scotland
- To remain competitive companies need to invest and innovate – including across supply chains

Implications for jobs, skills and the workplace:

- Automation should be seen in the context of specific tasks, not necessarily whole jobs or occupations
- We should all expect to work alongside “co-bots” in future – harnessing technology to boost productivity growth
- As machines are increasingly able to undertake more complex tasks, most commentators expect this to reinforce labour market polarisation
- Companies should consider investment in business process automation and their workforce in tandem
- Shorter-term disruption will lead to a net increase in new jobs and firms over the long-term as application areas multiply
- Successful adaptation will be characterised by skills adaptability and workplace innovation (particularly upskilling, job redesign and redeployment)