Made Smarter – Six Guiding Principles for Digitalisation

Digital technology should be a positive force for progress in all parts of the economy and society. In manufacturing it can deliver higher productivity, good jobs, and clean growth. The following principles can help ensure digital technology is introduced in a way that benefits the whole workforce.

1. Partnership at Work

A strong partnership is essential to any process of change. Employers will share plans for and address any issues arising from the introduction of digital technology through co-operation, consultation and mutual agreement with the workforce including union representatives where they are present at the workplace. It is a shared ambition that digital technology delivers better jobs, on decent terms and conditions.

2. Health, safety, welfare and environment

Industrial Digitalisation presents opportunities to improve safety and environmental impact in the workplace, throughout the supply chain and across society. Companies will assess any potential impacts on health, safety and sustainability arising from the use of digital technology and conduct appropriate training to mitigate any associated risks and to make the most of opportunities for improvement.

3. Developing digital skills for the future

Employers and employees have a shared ownership of skills development. This should be supported through organisational and personal development plans. Companies will ensure that people have access to the training they need. Government and employees (or their union representatives) will be part of the partnership on retraining. Employees and unions, where they are present, will be engaged in developing and agreeing retraining plans.

4. Respect at work

Workers are entitled to high standards of treatment. Job satisfaction, rather than job intensity, will lead to improved productivity. The sharing of data and trust in its use is critical. Companies should consider developing codes of conduct on data use, including within supply chains, drawn up in consultation with the workforce and their representatives. Companies need to demonstrate that employee data is secure and that they are in compliance with regulations.

5. Job Security and enhancement

Growth generated by digital technology should be reinvested, where possible, into areas that provide more opportunities and better jobs within the organisation. Individuals should see their roles enhanced as a consequence of digital technology. This will require open and creative ways to generate ideas for new products and/or areas for investment.

6. Equalities, diversity and inclusion

Digitalisation can support inclusivity but issues, including new ways of working and working time, job design, job evaluation, access to training, retraining and progression, can all have equality and diversity implications. Equality impact assessments should be included within any organisations' plans for digitalisation
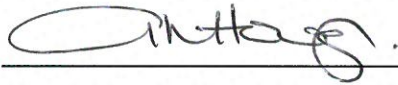
Signed, 6th November 2019

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