

#### **Attitudes to Upskilling**

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#### Introduction

- Report on a general public research study undertaken to explore awareness of and attitudes to upskilling.
- Questions included on Behaviour & Attitudes May No.2 Barometer survey, a nationally representative quantitative survey of the adult population.
- Interviewing a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults aged 16 and over. Fieldwork was undertaken online between 20<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021.
- The study used demographic quotas in respect of gender, age, social class, region and area of residence to achieve a population-representative sample.
- Results can be deemed to be accurate to within a margin of error of ± 2.8 percentage points.





Market size: 63% of the adult population falls into one of the categories relevant to upskilling initiatives coordinated by the HEA

<b>37%</b> 1,431,000 adults	Working but keen to upskill/reskill
<b>25%</b> 957,000	Unemployed/in receipt of social welfare payments
<b>21%</b> 798,000	Working in a job I don't enjoy and like to do something else
	aid off during pandemic and oping to return to work
	ent/impending graduate & ied lack skills in demand
	ng duties for years & areturn to workforce



The survey asked about these categories to identify those to whom courses offered by the HEA might be relevant: this ranges from more than a third of the adult population, who have a broad ambition to upskill or reskill, to roughly 7% who are currently working as a domestic carer but who aspire to return to the workforce.

## Market size: 63% of the adult population fall into one of these categories

Base: All adults 1,022/,3,839,000



Almost 2 in 3 adults indicate that they fall into one of the above categories. Just slightly more than a third (37%) indicate that none of the above apply to them.



#### Sizing the market x gender, age & class



Base: All adults 1,022/,3,839,000

Base : All Respondents		Gender		Kids in HHold		Age					Social Class	
	Total	Male	Female	Yes	No	-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ABC1F	C2DE
UNWTD	1022	488	534	345	677	121	173	317	257	154	505	517
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Working but keen to upskill or reskill	37	38	36	48	32	45	56	46	32	7	47	28
Unemployed/in receipt of a social welfare payment	25	26	24	23	26	34	25	21	25	25	16	33
Working in a job I don't enjoy and would like to do something else	21	22	19	27	18	28	30	25	20	1	25	17
Laid-off during the pandemic, and hoping to return to work	10	10	9	10	10	19	15	7	9	3	10	10
A recent graduate/soon to graduate and worried I don't have the type of skills in demand at the moment	8	8	9	8	8	36	10	4	2	-	12	5
Have been on caring duties for a number of years and want to return to the workforce	7	6	7	13	4	13	5	9	7	1	6	7
None of these	37	37	37	29	41	27	22	28	40	68	37	37

Colour coding indicates statistically significant differences, with the figures highlighted in green significantly higher and those in pink significantly lower

Interestingly, many in middle age and particularly middle class and with kids indicate that although they have a job, they would like to upskill or reskill. Those unemployed are principally younger and working class while many under the age of 35 indicate broad desires to reskill, or worry about their lack of suitability to existing vacancies. Interestingly, results differ very little by gender.

#### Sizing the market x lifestage & work categorisation



Base: All adults 1,022/,3,839,000

Base : All Respondents	Total		Lifestage					Work Categorisation						
		Single	Pre Family	Family Pre School	Family Pre Teen	Family Teen	Empty Nester	Unemp / social welfare	during	want	Underskil led recent grad	l Unenjoya ble job / like to reskill	Working but keen to upskill reskill	
UNWTD	1022	300	102	137	149	87	247	251	99	68	83	222	393	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Working but keen to upskill or reskill	37	35	53	53	47	46	17	31	57	42	57	77	100	
Unemployed/in receipt of a social welfare payment	25	34	20	29	16	23	19	100	53	48	52	23	20	
Working in a job I don't enjoy and would like to do something else	21	20	29	33	23	22	10	19	43	32	39	100	43	
Laid-off during the pandemic, and hoping to return to work	10	11	19	12	8	11	3	21	100	26	30	20	15	
A recent graduate/soon to graduate and worried I don't have the type of skills in demand at the moment	8	15	17	10	4	3	1	18	26	28	100	16	13	
Have been on caring duties for a number of years and want to return to the workforce	7	4	2	14	15	10	3	13	18	100	22	10	8	
None of these	37	31	26	25	29	23	62	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Colour coding indicates statistically significant differences, with the figures highlighted in green significantly higher and those in pink significantly lower

Those fitting into each of these categories are mainly in the family lifestages, although a third who were classified as single indicate that they are unemployed or in receipt of social welfare payments. Not surprisingly, many fit into multiple categories: for example, of those laid off during the pandemic, almost 6 in 10 (57%) say they are working but would like to upskill or reskill, while 43% of them are working in a job they don't like and would like to do something else.

#### Attitudes to work & upskilling

Base: All adults 1,022/,3,839,000





Focussing on work and upskilling, we see that many (51%) aspire to having broader career options than they currently do, with just under half wanting the opportunity to retrain or work in a more progressive or evolving sector. 37% feel that the pandemic has made them consider upskilling or reskilling (although conversely a third indicate the opposite.) About 1 in 3 lack the confidence to think about applying for different types of work.

(?)Q.3 And to what extent would you personally agree or disagree with the following statements, about upskilling or reskilling?

## I would really like the opportunity to retrain to work in a more progressive and evolving sector



8-0

Base: All adults 1,022/,3,839,000

**Disagree strongly** 

9

	%	<b>****</b> *		ŤŤ*				
Agree strongly 19		Agree At all		Agree At all		Agree At all		
	19		%		%		%	
	U25	63	Single	45	Unemp/social welfare	45		
Agree generally	25-34	59	Pre Family	62	Laid-off during pandemic	65		
	26	35-49	55	Family Pre School	59	Caring/want to return to work	72	
		50-64	37	Family Pre Teen	58	Underskilled recent grad	75	
		65+	10	Family Teen	53	Unenjoyable job/like to reskill	77	
Neither agree or disagree	31	ABC1F	51	Empty Nester	20	Working but keen to upskill reskill	72	
		C2DE	39					
Disagree generally	13	Colour coding indicates statistica	ally significant diffe	rences, with the figures highlighte	d in green significar	ntly higher and those in pink significantly	lower	

Focussing on those who would like to retrain for more progressive and evolving work sectors, the opportunity is predominantly younger (under 50), broadly more middle class and among those from the pre-family up to family pre-teen lifestages.

#### The idea of working in new technology appeals very strongly to me Base: All adults 1,022/,3,839,000





New technology is more attractive to those under 35 and more notably so those from middle class rather than working class backgrounds. Interestingly, those currently unemployed or indeed carers who would like to return to the workplace are much less likely to agree with this statement.

Q.3 And to what extent would you personally agree or disagree with the following statements, about upskilling or reskilling?

10

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#### I would like to have much broader career options than I currently do Base: All adults 1,022/,3,839,000





Many aspire to broader career options and again this is predominantly those in the age categories under 50 and either classified as pre family, family pre school or family pre teen. Those unemployed are generally less likely to agree with this statement.

#### I worry that there is little future in what I do

Base: All adults 1,022/,3,839,000



A more polarised response here with stronger agreement that ones current occupation may be constrained among younger workers, with more generalised disagreement over the age of 50. Differences by lifestage are slight overall.



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#### The Covid-19 pandemic has made me consider upskilling/reskilling Base: All adults 1,022/,3,839,000



**P-A** 

	%	<b>****</b> *	<b>***</b> *					
Agree strongly	14		Agree At all		Agree At all		Agree At all	
			%		%		%	
		U25	48	Single	38	Unemp/social welfare	40	
Agree generally	23	25-34	53	Pre Family	50	Laid-off during pandemic	65	
		35-49	46	Family Pre School	55	Caring/want to return to work	64	
		50-64	30	Family Pre Teen	48	Underskilled recent grad	57	
Neither agree or disagree	31	65+	10	Family Teen	36	Unenjoyable job/like to reskill	62	
		ABC1F	41	Empty Nester	16	Working but keen to upskill reskill	66	
		C2DE	34					
Disagree generally	16	Colour coding indicates statistica	ally significant diffe	rences, with the figures highlighte	d in green significar	ntly higher and those in pink significantly	lower	
Disagree strongly	16							

The impact of the pandemic has been quite mixed with more than a third saying it has made them want to consider reskilling and just under a third disagreeing with this. In general, older adults tend to disagree and younger ones are more likely to want to upskill or reskill.

### I don't have the confidence to think about applying for different work

Base: All adults 1,022/,3,839,000

14





A deficit of confidence is more characteristic of those aged between 25 and 50 and particularly of those in the family pre-school or the family pre-teen lifestages. Most notably here, we see carers who would like to return to the workforce tend to say that they lack the confidence to do so. The gender difference is substantial but not significant.

Q.3 And to what extent would you personally agree or disagree with the following statements, about upskilling or reskilling?

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## The cost and time it might take to upskill make me unlikely to consider a change



8-0

Base: All adults 1,022/,3,839,000

15

	%	<b>****</b>	<b>****</b>					
Agree strongly	15		Agree At all		Agree At all		Agree At all	
			%		%		%	
Agree generally 29	U25	48	Single	42	Unemp/social welfare	41		
	25-34	52	Pre Family	51	Laid-off during pandemic	55		
	35-49	54	Family Pre School	58	Caring/want to return to work	60		
		50-64	44	Family Pre Teen	58	Underskilled recent grad	57	
		65+	14	Family Teen	42	Unenjoyable job/like to reskill	72	
Neither agree or disagree	33	ABC1F	49	Empty Nester	27	Working but keen to upskill reskill	61	
		C2DE	38					
Disagree generally	14	Colour coding indicates statistic	cally significant diffe	rences, with the figures highlighte	d in green significar	ntly higher and those in pink significantly	lower	
Disagree strongly	10							

A slight majority between the ages of 25 and 50 and among those from middle class backgrounds feel that cost and time to retrain could indeed be a deterrent. This is more particularly the case for those working in an unenjoyable job who would like to reskill and indeed for carers who would like to return to the workplace.

#### **Analysis of Sample**

Base: All adults 1,022/,3,839,000



Colour coding indicates statistically significant differences, with the figures highlighted in green significantly higher and those in pink significantly lower

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### Summary & Conclusions (1 of 2)

- Almost 2 out of 3 adults agree with one or more of a series of statements in respect of wanting to upskill and/or return to the workforce. For example, a quarter are unemployed and in receipt of social welfare payments, while 10% of the population indicate that they have been laid off during the pandemic but hope to return to work.
- As many as a fifth work in a job that they don't enjoy and would like to be able to do something else. Most of the people who tend to agree with these statements are predominantly in the younger age groups with a notable concentration between 25 and 34. Interestingly those from middle-class backgrounds are much more likely to acknowledge that they may have a skills deficiency or are in need of retraining.
- Just over half of the adult population (51%) indicate that they would like the opportunity to retrain to work in more progressive and evolving sectors. This is particularly the case for those under the age of 50 and in the pre-family or family lifestages, and among those who feel under-skilled or have a desire to participate in retraining.



### Summary & Conclusions (2 of 2)

- Again, roughly half would like to work in a more technological area, but this is particularly characteristic of those under 35 and from more affluent backgrounds.
- Just under 2 in 5 (37%) feel that the pandemic has made them consider the importance of potentially upskilling or reskilling. Again, these are typically under the age of 50 and most notable between 25 and 34.
- However, a third of adults say that they lack the confidence to think about applying for different type of work and interestingly this confidence deficit is most apparent between 25 and 50 and particularly characteristic of those who have been involved in a caring role in recent years but who aspire to return to the workforce.
- More than 2 in 5 indicate that the cost and time it might take to upskill makes them less likely to consider taking part in upskilling or reskilling.
- In overall terms, there is broad appetite for the types of courses offered by the HEA, but somewhat more limited awareness in respect of them and undoubted logic in enhancing their profile or promotion.



# Thank you.



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