Where is all the talent?
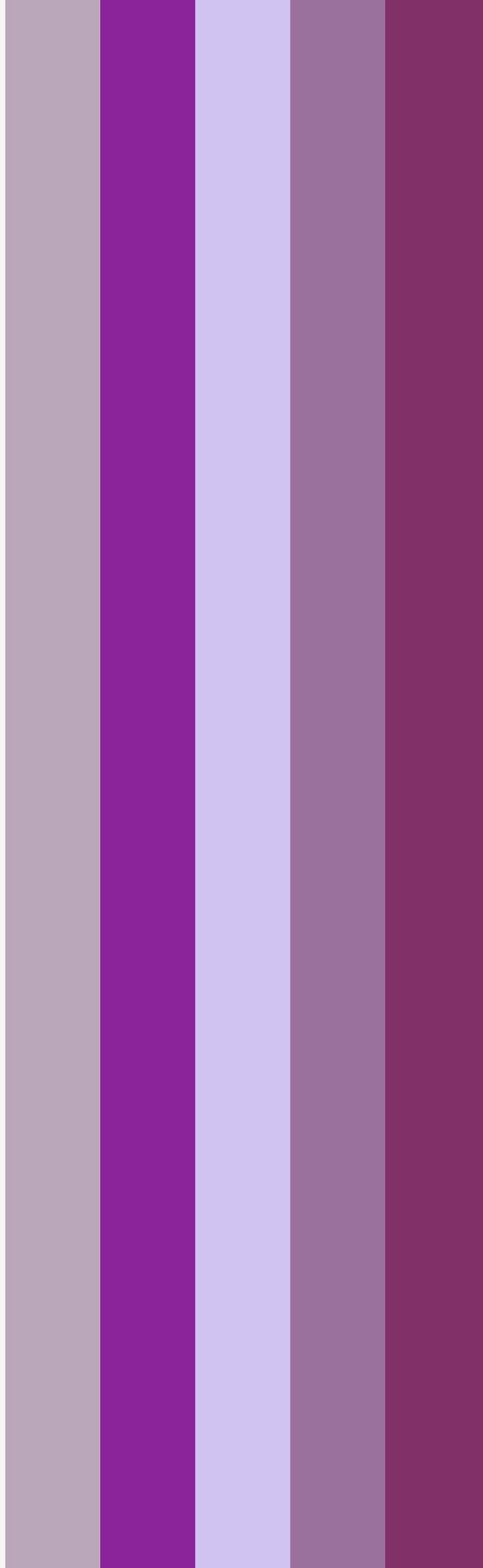
An in depth look at women returners and the economic impact on the technology industry

AUTUMN 2019

WELCOME

In 2017 my journey supporting returners to the technology industry began with the birth of Tech Returners, I'd seen the challenges first hand of returning to a career in technology and connected with individuals mostly women who had faced the same hurdles and discovered the same lack of support.

Since then we've enabled more than 29 careers in technology through our programmes and initiatives, 27 of those were women but there's so much more to be done.

And that's why we worked with University of Manchester Business school to produce this research, to demonstrate the real numbers of women looking to return to the industry, the real reasons they don't come back and the economic impact this has for businesses and the tech skills shortage we're always hearing about.

It's time for positive action.

Beckie Taylor

CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
TECH RETURNERS

FOREWORD

Having spent a number of years in senior Tech roles and building tech teams I was well aware of the talent challenges which exist for businesses and since having co founded Tech Returners it's not a situation where I see much change.

Where we have seen change of course is, that there is more technology than ever for businesses to choose from and you don't have to be a tech business to be heavily using tech.

So what's the solution? it's about finding the channels which provide the required tech talent and the returner market is one such channel.

Over the past two years I've worked with countless returners full of ambition, a passion for tech and with a wealth of transferable skills. I've seen them move into technology roles and bring tangible benefits to the businesses who employ them and that's what this research is all about, shining a light on this untapped talent pipeline ,empowering careers and helping businesses to grow.
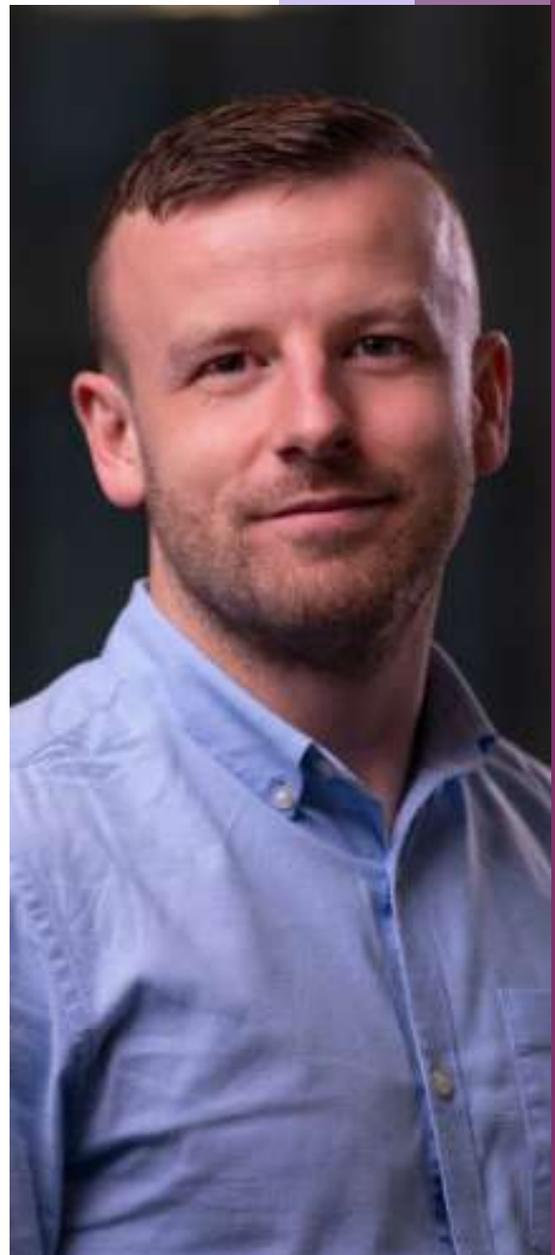
James Heggs

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER
TECH RETURNERS

92%

of employers in Northern England experience a skills shortage in tech.

£9K

Average vacancy cost for an employer

47%

treat CV gaps less favourably.

72%

have no formal approach to recruiting returner talent

97% of employers admit their tech roles lack diversity.

Meanwhile... **3, 948**

women are on a career break from tech

79% of them say they experienced no support when returning to a career after a break

The numbers don't add up...

The challenge for employers

The headline stats tell us there's a skills shortage, businesses are struggling and there's a returner market out there waiting to fill the gap but what other challenges are employers facing and what barriers are they putting in place...

84%
STRUGGLE TO FIND TECH TALENT

92%
ARE FACING A TECH SKILLS SHORTAGE

79%
BLAME A LACK OF DOMESTIC TALENT

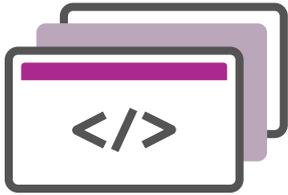"**Finding people with specific tech systems and industry knowledge is quite a challenge...**"

Alison McGurk, IT Director – Architecture, Data and Intelligence. AstraZeneca.

The cost of missing skills

WHICH SKILLS ARE MOST IN DEMAND AND WHAT'S THE REAL COST?

29% of employers say tech vacancies cost £9k or more per year.

48% of employers in the North fill to struggle developer roles.

24% of employers across the UK struggled to fill Software Development and Application Development roles.

233,000 jobs
with unmet talent needs exist in the North West alone...

ARE BUSINESSES DOING ENOUGH TO HELP THEMSELVES

There's clearly a need for businesses across the UK to be able to access necessary tech skills, meanwhile the returner market remains an untapped source of talent, so what's stopping businesses?

61% of North West employers are willing to pay less than £3k for returner talent.

But this isn't just an issue exclusive to the North West, 32% of London based businesses weren't willing to pay more than £3,000 for returner talent and just 10% of North West and London organisations were willing to pay more than £6,000 for returner talent.

Meanwhile we know the average cost of a tech vacancy is £9,000, so...

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

60%

of women returning to a career in technology cited work/life balance as the biggest barrier.

£4,9k

Average salary drop after a career break.

46%

Said the traditional Mon - Fri, 9-5 work pattern was a significant factor in their decision not to return.

43%

Experienced a reduced position after their career break.

74% of women in tech believe organisations can do more to attract returner talent.

79% of returners say they experienced no support when returning to a career after a break

29% of women in tech on a career break say they have doubts about returning

The women behind the stats

Our day to day work brings us into contact with hundreds of returners many of them women and we know first hand the challenges they face. Here they share some of the very real reasons behind their returner journeys.

I wanted to return to a career in tech but it just didn't seem possible.."

RUTH
TECH RETURNERS GRADUATE

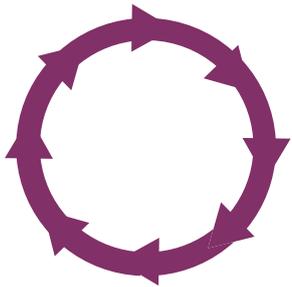## "I experienced a significant drop in my seniority when I got back to work."

ANONYMOUS PARTICIPANT
SOFTWARE DEVELOPER, LEEDS

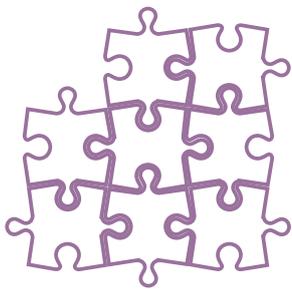## "The lack of flexibility and work life balance were the biggest barriers upon returning to work"

ANONYMOUS INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT
APPLICATION SUPPORT ANALYST, SCOTLAND

Remember those missing skills?

72% of Women In Tech on a career break are skilled in agile development.

24% of employers across the UK struggled to fill roles which require these skills.

84% of employers struggle to find senior tech talent.

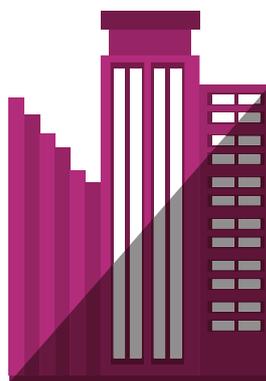26% of Women in Tech on a career break are skilled in Leadership.

THE SOLUTION

Is simple. Businesses need to think differently about skills.

The talent is out there.

Skills Gap

233,000 jobs with an unmet talent need

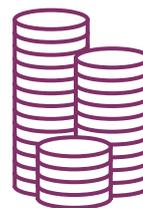**+**

3,948 Women on a career break from tech

INVESTING IN RETURNER TALENT

Business Growth

Increased Diversity

Economic Growth

Reduced skills gap

GET IN TOUCH

Talk to us about investing in returner talent and how we can partner with your business.

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www.techreturners.com