Funding the Future

The mising ingredient

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Having criticised the media this morning, The Telegraph finally came up with a story.

As they have noted:

Graduates are facing the worst job market on record as vacancies evaporate under pressure from tax and technology.

Just 8,383 roles for university leavers were advertised in July, a 45pc drop on a year ago and the lowest since the figures were first compiled in 2016.

Their preferred solutions are, of course, tax cuts and denying people education. Neither is the answer, but denying there is a crisis is pretending reality does not exist. This crisis is real and has consequences.

There is also only one known solution, as it is clear that the private sector will not create the number of jobs required to engage younger people in the UK in work, and that is for the government to take on that job instead.

This is what Keynes always said was required in an economic downturn, and even if many of these young graduates' grandparents are sitting around noting how well off they are and how terrible it is that young people are too lazy to work (which complaint I hear too often, usually from people who look like Telegraph and Mail readers) the reality is that as far as younger peiople are coincerned we altready are well and triule in recession.

They do not need another training scheme.

They don't want a six-month fix.

They want long-term thinking and commitment.

And what they most especially want is something worthwhile, and what they know is that if existing jobs were so easy to replace with AI, then either the jobs were not worth doing, or the employers are too indifferent to their staff to want to work for.

Of the two, I think the second might be more important. When I graduated, we had a country still populated by employers who thought about long-term value generation, even if not all of them were very good at it.

Now we have a country where most large employers focus only on short-term cash generation.

That change of emphasis has massive consequences. Young people who realise their employer will ditch them at the first opportunity cannot get excited about investing in work they know they are destined not to do. They want to add value. They want to create. That's what I hear.

Now, how will the government do that?

How is it going to create housing?

How is it going to manage the environment?

How is it going to build the facilities people need to live well in this world?

How is it going to deliver a sustainable future, in other words?

It can do those things, but only if it accepts that it is its job to do so.

It will solve unemployment at the same time.

It is really not hard to join up the dots here. Unless, of course, you are in government, when it appears to be impossible. And why? Because of all the neoliberals screaming in politicians' ears, from the Treasury to the Telegraph and onwards. They are the impediment to young people. Money is not. We can always create that, and people are ready, waiting and wanting to get on with it. Only political willingness is missing.