



PARC CONFERENCE 2026

The Technology Paradox

Why More Investment Hasn't Delivered More Productivity, and what it means for Reward

• Wednesday 22 April 2026 • UCL Centre for Education, London • 08:45 – 16:45

Organisations are spending more than ever on technology – yet productivity gains remain stubbornly elusive. This inaugural PARC Conference brings together leading academics, seasoned technology practitioners and senior reward professionals to explore why, and what we should do about it.

Expect challenge, not consensus. The day is designed to move you from macro-level evidence to workplace reality to practical action – with plenty of room for your own questions and debate along the way.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

08:45	<p>Arrival & Registration</p> <p>Coffee on arrival.</p>
09:05	<p>Welcome & Scene Setting</p> <p><i>Karen Clark, Managing Director, PARC</i></p>
09:15	<p>INTERACTIVE</p> <p>Table Challenge Questions – Round 1</p> <p>Your first opportunity to engage. Work with your table to tackle a set of provocation questions that will frame the morning's sessions.</p>
09:30	<p>KEYNOTE</p> <p>People-Centred AI</p> <p><i>Andrew Rogoyski, Director of Innovation & Partnerships, University of Surrey</i></p> <p>A brisk tour through the cycles of technology hype – from AI and quantum to cyber security – and a candid look at where the real opportunities and risks sit for organisations today. Where does productivity actually fit in?</p>



<p>10:00</p>	<p>KEYNOTE</p> <p>The Productivity Puzzle</p> <p><i>Dr Nina Jörden, Assistant Professor, Bennett Institute for Public Policy, University of Cambridge</i></p> <p>The macro-economics of the productivity problem and what it means at the level of the organisation. What is “organisational capital” – and are we even asking the right questions?</p>
<p>10:30</p>	<p>Discussion Break</p>
<p>10:45</p>	<p>KEYNOTE</p> <p>Technology in the Workplace – Evidence from the Field</p> <p><i>Professor Marleen Huysman, Director, KIN Centre for Digital Innovation, VU Amsterdam</i></p> <p>What is technology actually doing in workplaces right now? What’s enabling performance, what’s getting in the way, and what does the evidence tell us about where it really makes a difference?</p>
<p>11:15</p>	<p>PANEL</p> <p>Expert Panel – What Productivity Gains Are Realistic?</p> <p>Our three keynote speakers come together for a facilitated exchange. Where do they agree? Where do they clash? And where should reward and HR leaders place their bets? Audience questions encouraged.</p>
<p>11:45</p>	<p>INTERACTIVE</p> <p>Table Challenge Questions – Round 2</p> <p>Return to your tables armed with fresh perspectives. Panel experts respond and challenge.</p>
<p>12:10</p>	<p>KEYNOTE</p> <p>Tech, Humans and the Mindful Business Charter</p> <p><i>Richard Martin, CEO, Mindful Business Charter</i></p> <p>As technology reshapes the speed and expectations of work, how do we protect human wellbeing? A timely perspective on keeping people at the centre of change.</p>
<p>12:20</p>	<p>Lunch & Discussion</p> <p>Buffet lunch. Continue the conversation.</p>



<p>13:10</p>	<p>CASE STUDY</p> <p>Tech in the Wrong Hands</p> <p><i>Faisal Galaria, NED, Technology Adviser & Investor</i></p> <p>Structure, teams and hard-won lessons from a career deploying technology at scale. What happens when the tech is fine but the organisation isn't ready?</p>
<p>13:30</p>	<p>CASE STUDY</p> <p>On a Shoestring – Does It Have to Cost a Lot?</p> <p><i>Tony Clements, CEO, Ealing Council</i></p> <p>Real-world lessons from the public sector. Practical, resourceful technology implementation that delivers results without the big budget.</p>
<p>13:50</p>	<p>PANEL</p> <p>Expert Panel – Technology in Practice</p> <p>Lessons, failures and frank advice from the field. What works in practice versus theory? What should reward leaders stop doing? An open, challenging discussion drawing out transferable lessons.</p>
<p>14:15</p>	<p>INTERACTIVE</p> <p>Scenario Exercise</p> <p>An interactive case study that puts the day's thinking to the test.</p>
<p>15:00</p>	<p>Coffee & Transition to Workshops</p>
<p>15:10</p>	<p>WORKSHOPS</p> <p>Afternoon Workshop Sessions</p> <p>Attendees rotate through both workshops.</p> <p>Workshop A: Leveraging AI to Reimagine Year-End and Total Reward Processes</p> <p>See agentic AI brought to life with tangible examples of how it can transform total rewards – from new-hire offers and off-cycle actions to year-end compensation. Explore how a single, governed decision framework can make every pay action defensible, transparent and policy-aligned. Interactive, hands-on, and grounded in what's possible now.</p> <p>Workshop B: AI, Roles & Job Architecture – Keeping Pace</p> <p>AI is moving fast; job architecture isn't always keeping up. When tasks change, roles need redesigning – putting frameworks and career progression under pressure. This session explores the impact on</p>



	<p>organisational structure, shares real examples of how organisations are adapting, and helps you test your own readiness.</p> <p><i>Workshop Session 2 begins at 15:50.</i></p>
16:30	<p>INTERACTIVE</p> <p>Closing: So What (Now)?</p> <p>Drawing together the day's themes into commitments you can take back to your organisation.</p>
16:45	<p>Conference Close</p>