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Equality, diversity, inclusion



By April 2018 in the UK all companies with 250 employees or more need to publish their gender pay gap annually, with the aim of eliminating the gap within a generation. This is designed to encourage large employers to take informed action to close their gender pay gap where one exists; this being a measure of the difference between the average hourly earnings for men and women.

For engineers in the UK this is of interest because we still have a lack of female engineers in the profession, despite many years of trying to improve the situation, and we might expect engineering firms to have larger gender pay gaps,

especially where there are fewer women earning the higher wages at the top of the organisation.

The UK can look to our other engineering colleagues around the world to learn from some of their initiatives for encouraging more females into the profession. Where the UK only has 11% of the engineering workforce as female (Engineering UK 2017 report), and an even fewer 5% of registered engineers and technicians as female, the IRSE India Section can point out that they have 30% of their engineering graduates as female (UNESCO Science Report: towards 2030.)

In industry and in railway signalling there is a shortage of engineers in general, so by attracting and developing more female engineers there is the opportunity to utilise this untapped skill set.

We've seen the IRSE supporting women with Claire Porter as our 2011/12 IRSE president, and in this issue of IRSE News

we congratulate Portia Xaba-Nkuna on being appointed the new chair of the South African Section, but no doubt there's a lot more we could do.

I was interested to read in the October 2017 IRSE News of Clare Jameson's story with Northern Ireland Railways, as well as Rang Lea, originally from Korea, writing to her 11-year-old self in July/August 2017. So, this is a call out to our friends around the world – send in your stories and experience.

Remember that if you have views you'd like to share about this, or any other aspect of signalling or telecommunications engineering, we'd love to hear from you. Our mantra of "inform, discuss, develop" depends upon members sharing views and ideas.

Claire Beranek,
Route Asset Manager Signalling
Network Rail
IRSE News Guest Editor

Cover story



This month's cover photograph shows a Class 700 train arriving at London Blackfriars station on the Thameslink line in the UK. This part of London has seen massive investment in the railway infrastructure in order to meet rising passenger demand.

The train is fitted with ETCS level 2 and automatic train operation systems, both necessary in order to get the planned 24 trains per hour service through the heavily constrained infrastructure in the core section.

Despite the complexity of this project Network Rail has successfully delivered the signalling, control and telecomms aspects of this work through collaborative working with the supply chain. This is seen as one of the leading examples of the introduction of digital technology on the UK network.

Photo Ian Mitchell.

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