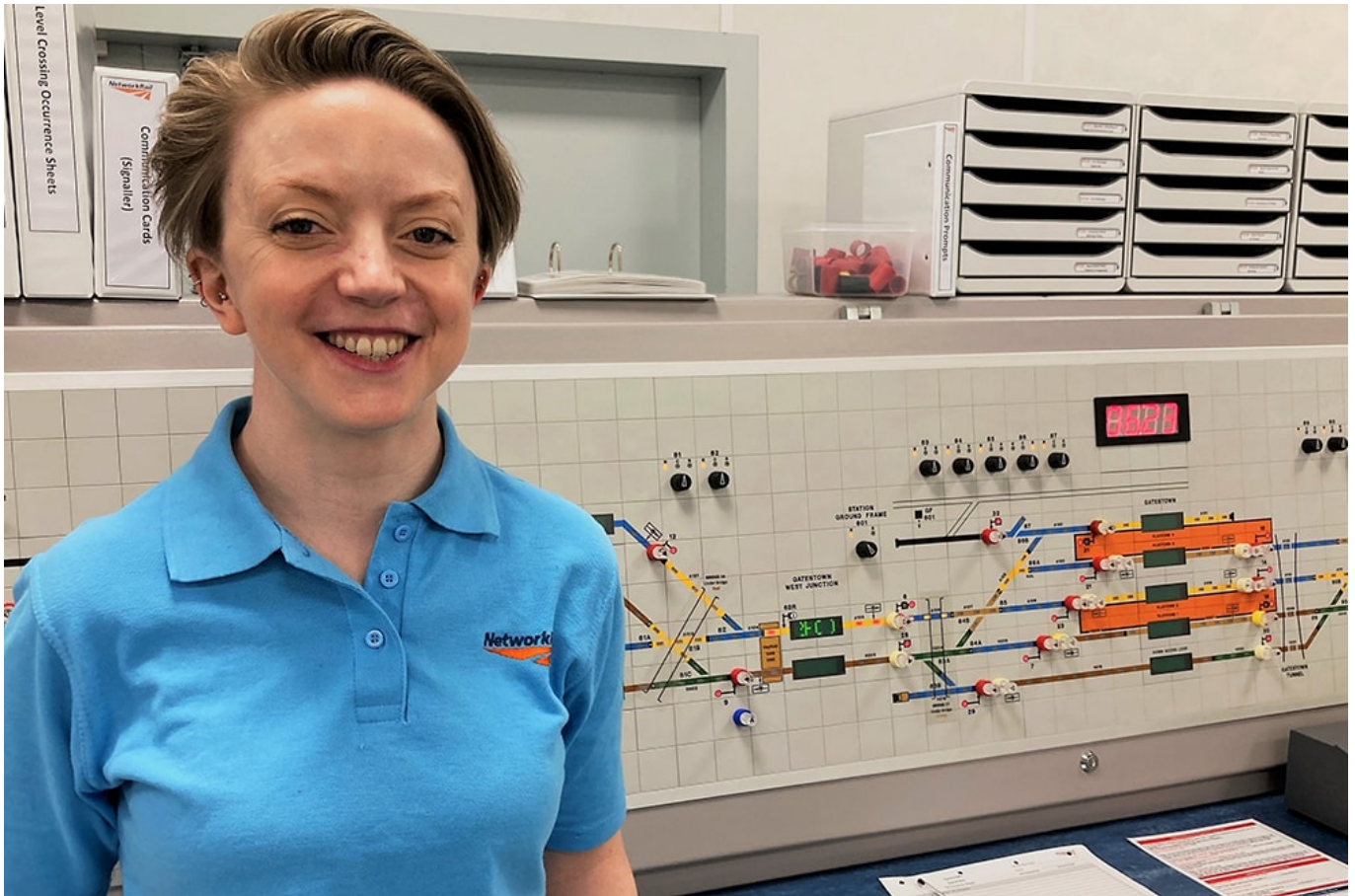


Network Rail signalling apprentice challenging railway stereotypes

February 11, 2022



Network Rail is on the look-out for its next group of talented apprentices to begin an exciting career on the railway. With applications now open, there are more than 50 level 2 and 3 **engineering** opportunities on offer, in 2022, across Wales & Western.

Leading the calls for people to take up the opportunity is Tori Glover, who busts five common apprenticeship myths to encourage others to take the leap towards an exciting career with Network Rail.

The 32-year-old, from Overton, near Wrexham, joined Network Rail as a level 2 signalling apprentice in December 2021. Having worked in several different jobs, since leaving school, Tori is now following in her grandfather's footsteps and training to become a railway signaller, based in Shrewsbury.

Tori admits friends and family were sceptical about her latest career choice and wants to use her positive experience to challenge outdated stereotypes that might act as a barrier to others considering an apprenticeship or joining the rail industry.

Here's what Tori had to say about some common apprenticeship myths...

1. Apprenticeships are only open to young adults

"I am actually 32-years-old and the other members of my intake range from 18 to 36 so, no, that is not true!"

2. Apprenticeships are for the less academic

"You could say I have a fairly developed academic life!"

"When I was younger, I thought I wanted to be a vet but after volunteering at my local practice, I realised it wasn't for me. After finishing school, I was accepted on a scholarship in America where I studied criminal justice and forensic accounting and took an internship with the city police department. I later went on to study a degree in French and Russian in the UK."

3. You have to be a rail enthusiast to work in the rail industry.

"I was actually more into planes than trains before joining Network Rail. "In 2019 I was accepted onto an apprenticeship to become an Air Traffic Controller but, unfortunately, the pandemic prevented this from going ahead and that was when I spotted the signaller apprenticeship at Network Rail. I thought, if I can't control planes, I would control trains!"

"In all honesty, the only trains I knew before joining were Thomas the Tank Engine and Ivor the Engine!"

4. Railway apprenticeships are only for men

"Absolutely not! I know there still seems to be this myth that women don't or can't work on the railway but it's not true. There are many women in all areas of Network Rail and some teams are even made up entirely of women.

"Through my research I discovered Network Rail is not only one of the top employers in the country, but also one of the top employers in the country for female workers.

"Your gender doesn't matter. The opportunities are for everyone,"

5. Apprentices don't get paid very much

"I don't know why there is this preconception that apprentices are not well paid. Network Rail apprenticeships are actually very well paid. In fact, this is the best paid job I have ever had. There are other great benefits at Network Rail, too, like the pension scheme. I would say do your research."

6. A railway signaller just pulls levers all day long

"I think my friends fell victim to this myth. They thought a signaller just sits in a box, not doing very much all day except pulling a lever every now and then. But there is a whole lot more to it than that. There is a huge level of responsibility and the course I am on is teaching me how to maintain and use all of the

equipment that keeps trains safe on the railway.

“It feels like I have found my forever home at Network Rail. Obviously, it is early days – But I can really see myself being in it for the long run.

“In my opinion, it’s a no brainer – the apprentice scheme is a great way in and once you’re in, you are set for life!”

Also praising the apprenticeship scheme in Rachel Heath, who began her career on the railway as a Virgin Trains 20-years-ago and has worked her way up through the industry to become head of operations delivery for Wales & Borders at Network Rail.

“The opportunities on the railway are endless”, Rachel said.

“Network Rail’s apprenticeship scheme provides fantastic on the job training, mixed with classroom-based learning and it’s the beginning of a journey that can lead to varied career options, including the chance to study for further qualifications and gain a chartered membership of a professional engineering institute.

“We have opportunities for signallers, front-line maintenance roles, operatives and technicians in Wales and Western and we’ll be keeping applications open until all slots are filled.”

Network Rail Wales & Western is currently on the hunt for 53 engineering apprentices. It follows a pause in apprentice recruitment, in 2021 due to the pandemic. Most apprentice learning had to be done online, to keep trainees safe, which left a backlog of in-person training to deliver.

Pausing recruitment meant all its current apprentices had the time to get up to date with their learning at their work locations. Network Rail says it is now very excited to have the opportunity to bring new cohorts in, and to deliver its apprenticeships in a safe and engaging environment throughout 2022 and beyond.

- Network Rail is now accepting **applications** for the Autumn intake of Level 3 Engineering apprentices
- Signalling apprentice applications are due to open later in 2022

Photo and video credit: Network Rail