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Whilst we understand that there are continued economic issues affecting certain countries around the world, we can also see those countries investing in their railway industry and infrastructure. For a signalling and telecommunications engineer, the opportunity to develop outside the UK has never been so good. The high quality of skills and knowledge are rich pickings for railways around the world who want to signal and communicate with more trains in a safe and efficient manner. But where does that leave the UK?

From recent experiences we are seeing excellent engineers being tempted and leaving for pastures new, in order for them to reduce their stress levels and to provide a better life for themselves and their families. And to be honest, who would blame them! Working long hours all week and then at the weekend? Attending teleconferences at all times day and night? Covering for others who are on holiday or long term sick? Covering for vacancies that will never be filled? Working away from home for prolonged periods of time? Being told to achieve the impossible? Being influenced to reduce timescales via various means? Having to explain numerous times how things work? Having to explain what standards and procedures are? Being told you are redundant due to overhead costs? Who would be a signalling and telecommunications engineer in the UK?

If we are to try and tempt new, younger people into this industry, we need to change as an industry! Skilled, informed and competent signalling and telecommunications engineers are no longer in abundance. Over the last 20 years we have probably lost more by redundancy than anything else! Whilst there are encouraging signs for the future, a new direction should be sought.

We look forward to your feedback and comments.

The IRSE NEWS Team

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