



Karen Duffy

Head of Operational Programmes

Head of Service Delivery

Virgin Trains

Head of Performance

East Coast

Area Customer Service Manager

Network Rail

Seasons Delivery Specialist

Network Rail

Scheme Project Manager

Network Rail

Maintenance Protection Coordinator

Network Rail

Area Network Access Planner

Network Rail

Operational Planning Apprenticeship

Network Rail

Career Journey

Beginning her career in railway operations as an apprentice in operational planning, Karen preferred the routine and discipline of learning on the job over a conventional degree course. Being ambitious early on, Karen took every opportunity that presented itself and has kept moving to different operations roles. Wanting to make a difference, Karen likes to dive into the role and takes the first year to understand it and the second year to implement improvements.

Almost 10 years ago, Karen moved from Network Rail into TOCs, working as Head of Performance for East Coast. This led her to being Head of Service Delivery where she thrived in a role of “huge demands, huge rewards, working with real trains, real people and really making a difference.”

Getting On in Operations

After having great mentors and support herself, Karen’s advice is to get a mentor or buddy. They can help guide you to the things that you don’t know you need to know.

Make opportunities for yourself, bang on doors, ask questions and show your willingness - work hard and deliver.

Do a variety of jobs and keep moving. Take the positives out of every opportunity, even if you did not enjoy it.

Most importantly, have the belief that you can succeed in operations.

Creating a Career in Operations

Take every opportunity and be pro-active. Make time for learning to give yourself a good basis of knowledge.

If you are starting your career, look at a graduate scheme or apprenticeship as these will help to nurture your development and open doors.

“Take every opportunity to learn and be proactive”