

LEE PARKINS

BROADCAST SUPPORT MANAGER

I grew up in Castleford, a stereotypical coal mining town in the North of England. Most of the pits had closed by the time I reached working age in the late 1990s, although a few were still in operation, but I was adamant I was not going into that life.

From an early age, I'd always been interested in electronics and engineering. After leaving school, I went into further education, which was great, but I wanted to get more experience of working. I joined what was then National Trans Communication and is now Arqiva, as an apprentice technician working on emergency service radio equipment – Handhelds and Hill top sites.



As a young apprentice, I learnt quickly and was keen to progress. This progression came through working with my mentor at the time and creating a development plan. By working through and refining the plan, I gained a lot of experience and knowledge. I was delighted when Arqiva supported me to pursue a degree in engineering.

I spent the next six years working firstly on hill-based transmission infrastructure, then networks and control systems, before training in television broadcast engineering. Technology wise, it was a huge change for me, but with solid support from the colleagues I worked with, I thrived.

During the digital switch over – turning off the analogue terrestrial television transmission and moving everyone over to digital – I worked as Lead Engineer at several major broadcast sites whilst in the field. I then moved to the implementation side, overseeing the build, developing software and training teams. It was fantastic to be right at the heart of something so critical to the UK's national infrastructure.



Engineering colleagues at their winter awareness training course

Being part of the implementation team made me realise how much I enjoyed the management side of my role. This was an area I hadn't considered before, so began to tailor my development towards becoming a manager.

After being promoted to Engineering Team Leader at our Emley Moor site near Huddersfield, I went on to add a degree in Management Practice to my CV and progress to Head of Field Operations for the North.

Today, as Broadcast Support Manager, I work with our field engineers across the region, supporting process or technical issues with transmitter systems and working on our field operations' full potential project.

Recently, I've been out and about in local communities in the North East, following a fire at our Bilsdale transmission site in August 2021, which disrupted TV signal for about 600,000 households.

I've visited patients in hospitals and residential care homes, as well as vulnerable people with learning disabilities in independent living schemes, to help them retune their televisions and turn the signal back on.

I've come away from that experience feeling deeply privileged. I have always thought that what we do was important but encountering an elderly person who lives alone in a small flat and is without the comfort and connection to the outside world that television brings to them, has opened my eyes wider to the vital role we play.

In my 25 years with Arqiva, I'm proud to say that I've always taken the initiative to step forward, speak up and grab the numerous opportunities there are here to do more and do better. I'm looking forward to where the journey takes me next.