

# WOMEN IN TELECOMS: SECURING SKILLS, RETAINING TALENT, SHAPING THE FUTURE

*Opinion Piece*

**Supporting women in telecoms is key to securing the industry's future workforce.**

The value of diversity in the workplace is well established. Numerous studies and industry reports consistently demonstrate that diverse teams are more productive, more innovative, make better decisions and, ultimately, deliver stronger commercial outcomes. Despite this evidence, investment in diversity and inclusion initiatives can still struggle to gain traction at senior decision-making levels, often viewed as desirable rather than essential.

However, one reality can no longer be ignored: the UK telecoms industry is facing a significant and growing skills shortage. Recent analysis, including research by Oliver Wyman, suggests that the UK will require around 100,000 additional technology professionals to deliver current ambitions and future network plans. At the same time, demographic trends are moving in the wrong direction. The population aged 15 to 24—those currently in education or entering the workforce—is smaller than in previous generations, a factor that will further exacerbate skills constraints in the coming years.

**“If girls do not see women working in technical and leadership roles within telecoms, it becomes harder for them to imagine themselves following similar paths.”**



**COMMS  
COUNCIL  
UK**

THE VOICE OF ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS

In this context, the industry cannot afford to under-utilise or lose talent that is already within the workforce. Yet current figures show that women account for only around 20 per cent of the telecoms workforce, compared with approximately 45 per cent across the economy as a whole. Representation declines even further at senior levels. According to the 2025 Lovelace Report by Oliver Wyman, the economic cost of losing women at the mid-career stage is estimated to be around £2 billion. This is not simply a diversity issue; it is a workforce sustainability and productivity challenge.

Addressing this challenge requires action across the entire talent pipeline. While retention of mid-career women is critical, it is equally important to look further upstream. Engagement must begin in education, where young people are forming perceptions about career options and developing the skills that will shape their futures.

Without early exposure to telecoms and technology careers, many young women will never consider the sector as a viable or attractive option.

This is where visible role models play a crucial role. If girls do not see women working in technical and leadership roles within telecoms, it becomes harder for them to imagine themselves following similar paths. Increasing visibility is therefore essential. Ensuring women are represented on conference stages, at industry events, and in schools helps normalise their presence and demonstrates the breadth of opportunity available.

Alongside visibility, structured support through mentoring and coaching can make a meaningful difference. Confidence gaps and imposter syndrome remain common barriers for women at various career stages. Mentoring provides not only guidance and encouragement but also practical insight into navigating career progression within a complex and fast-moving industry.

Recognising these challenges, Comms Council UK (CCUK) launched its Women in Telecoms group over three years ago in response to growing demand from members. The group provides women working in the sector with regular opportunities to network, share experiences, discuss industry developments and exchange ideas. Importantly, it offers a tangible way for organisations to demonstrate their commitment to developing and retaining female talent.

Members benefit from a structured mentorship programme, an active online community, and a programme of online and in-person events. Participants also gain opportunities to speak at trade shows, contribute to podcasts and raise their professional profiles. Collectively, these activities help strengthen retention, build confidence and ensure women's voices are heard on the issues shaping the future of telecoms.

While the challenge is significant, small, practical actions can have a disproportionate impact.

Organisations are encouraged to review processes and working practices that may inadvertently exclude certain employees—for example, scheduling key meetings during school run times. Making mentoring and coaching more accessible, and actively encouraging women to engage with professional networks such as Women in Telecoms, can significantly increase the likelihood that talented individuals remain and progress within the industry.

Securing the future of telecoms depends on people as much as technology. Retaining and supporting women throughout their careers is not optional—it is essential to delivering the networks, services and innovation on which the UK depends.



## Author

**Tracey Wright FITP**

Managing Director - Magrathea  
Telecommunications

Chair - Comms Council UK