

# Building Better Connections

**Are the UK's offices future fit?**

Unveiling Cellnex UK's  
research into the connectivity  
challenges faced by today's  
hybrid workforce

**The Indoor Coverage Experts**

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# FOREWORD

## Gianluca Landolina – CEO of Cellnex UK

At Cellnex UK, we are proud to present our latest report, Building Better Connections. Written specifically for those at the helm of the UK's office buildings: commercial real estate and facilities managers.


**Building Better Connections** is born from Cellnex UK's extensive research, delving deep into the connectivity challenges faced by today's hybrid workforce. We engaged with 2,000 hybrid workers from across the UK, uncovering their genuine issues and concerns. These insights are designed to help you meet the evolving demands of today's workforce, your clients and key industry stakeholders.

The rise of flexible and hybrid working models necessitates a complete rethink of how we support the efficient operation of office buildings. With shifting priorities and

an increased reliance on digital technology, it is crucial to remain agile and adaptable in the services and facilities you provide.

In today's landscape, commercial real estate and facilities managers are already navigating numerous pressures, from budget constraints and economic uncertainty to the imperative of prioritising sustainability and net-zero goals. Ensuring smooth mobile connectivity might seem like just another challenge to add to the pile. However, this research has been commissioned to simplify the process of addressing these connectivity issues, allowing you to focus on other critical priorities and prepare your office buildings for the future.

Together, let's build better connections and pave the way for a more connected, efficient and sustainable future.

A portrait of Gianluca Landolina, CEO of Cellnex UK. He is a middle-aged man with short, graying hair and a light beard, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a building and sky. A green curved graphic element is on the left side of the page.

Gianluca Landolina  
CEO of Cellnex UK

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**In today's hybrid work world, staying connected is crucial. Yet, many commercial buildings are grappling with poor mobile connectivity on a daily basis, meaning employees need to step outside just to make a simple phone call.**

This connectivity challenge isn't just a minor inconvenience – it's affecting productivity and job satisfaction in a big way. A staggering 70% of the hybrid workers we spoke to have faced mobile connectivity issues in the office. Even more alarmingly, poor mobile connectivity is putting many off from wanting to come into the office at all.

The ripple effects of weak mobile signals in commercial buildings are huge, especially in modern office

environments where flexibility is the name of the game. As organisations push for more in-office work to boost efficiency, enhance employee wellbeing, and justify the financial investment of physical workspaces, connectivity issues can't be ignored.

Nearly two-thirds (61%) of hybrid workers are calling on their employers to boost office mobile connectivity. For those in the commercial real estate and facilities management sectors, meeting this demand ensures you're keeping up with basic tenant expectations, whilst also significantly boosting the value and appeal of your properties. In what we all know is a fiercely competitive market, it's clear that connectivity isn't just a nice to have – it's a must.



# ADDRESSING THE CONNECTIVITY CRISIS

## Just how bad is the problem?

Inadequate mobile connectivity in commercial buildings is a bigger issue than many realise. Our survey shows that 60% of hybrid workers have had to leave their office to make a phone call due to a poor mobile connection.

With hybrid working here to stay – 83% of UK organisations now offer it<sup>1</sup> – strong mobile connectivity is crucial. Workers commuting to the office expect reliable connections. Without it, the benefits of office work are lost, leading to frustration.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/reports/flexible-hybrid-working-2023/>

## → The impact on productivity, efficiency and wellbeing

Our research reveals that the poor mobile connectivity many hybrid workers face in the office is compounded by slow internet speeds (40%), weak signals (39%), and areas with no coverage (36%). Over a quarter (27%) experience these problems two to three days per week, impacting performance, collaboration, and job satisfaction.

Connectivity issues are a major concern for employers pushing for more in-office work and a significant 74% of hybrid workers we surveyed say these issues affect their productivity. Weak signals and dropped calls compromise basic tasks, impacting individual and team performance. Nearly three-quarters reported increased stress due to connectivity problems, affecting morale and mental health.

## → Hindering collaboration in hybrid working

Hybrid working means flexible schedules and multiple work locations. Ensuring effective collaboration in the office is crucial but challenging. Our research shows 63% of hybrid workers find connectivity issues hinder their collaboration, whether it's virtual meetings or phone calls.

## → The importance of addressing the connectivity challenge

Reliable mobile connectivity is essential for a positive work environment. It enables employees to stay connected, collaborate, and perform efficiently. Addressing these issues can enhance employee satisfaction, reduce stress, and foster a productive workplace. For commercial real estate and facilities managers, ensuring robust connectivity is no longer optional – it's a necessity to keep tenants happy and reduce turnover.

# THE CONNECTIVITY CONUNDRUM

While most of the UK enjoys strong mobile signal at home, many office buildings are barriers to this service. Thick walls, steel structures, and metallised-glass can block or weaken signals. As a result, over half (55%) of hybrid workers we surveyed report better mobile connections at home than in the office.

New buildings often meet stringent environmental goals, but connectivity can be overlooked in the process. Some materials can block signals, leading

**Why isn't office mobile connectivity good enough?**

to dropped calls, low data speeds, and coverage 'not spots', where the signal is blocked altogether. Additionally, office design also plays a crucial role, with stairwells, meeting rooms, and central areas often experiencing weaker signals.

Understanding how building materials and design impact connectivity is crucial. Recognising these challenges is the first step in planning and implementing strategies to improve mobile signal strength in your buildings.



Edmund Wilkinson  
Head of Sales



**Innovative solutions for uninterrupted office connectivity**

# SEAMLESS SIGNALS

**Our Head of Sales for In-Building Solutions, Edmund Wilkinson, examines how Cellnex UK's solutions can enhance your building's mobile connectivity:**

"Leveraging state-of-the-art technology, Cellnex UK delivers outstanding in-building connectivity that supports a wide range of services from mobile communication to smart building applications. We tailor our solutions to suit the needs of your building, and offer a range of commercial models, ensuring a bespoke solution for any connectivity challenge.

"We've built strong connections with all UK Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), simplifying the process for you by reducing the complexity of dealing with multiple parties. We offer a comprehensive service, including design, installation, management of MNO connections, system monitoring, and maintenance – ensuring you're in safe hands from start to finish.

"We provide a suite of technology solutions to ensure your building is always connected, keeping your operations running smoothly and efficiently. Our findings clearly demonstrate that many office buildings across the country are not yet fit for purpose when it comes to facilitating the needs of a modern workforce and we must all ensure that the UK's infrastructure is suitably upgraded to meet expectations."

## Distributed Antenna System (DAS)

**One way to enhance mobile connectivity throughout your building is through our Distributed Antenna System (DAS), designed to boost signal strength and improve coverage.**

DAS can tackle mobile connectivity issues by distributing the cellular signal throughout, ensuring every corner of your building gets the signal it needs. This system is versatile, supporting various mobile networks and frequencies. With DAS in place, you can expect seamless mobile connectivity which eliminates issues with the fundamentals like making calls and sending emails.

DAS is an ideal solution for larger buildings, including major office buildings, but new technology is emerging to suit smaller and mid-sized locations too.

## New solutions for offices – Neutral Host In-Building (NHIB)

**There is a second major specification for In-Building Solutions known as NHIB (Neutral Host In-Building).**

Underpinned by a neutral host platform located in our datacentre environment, the architecture delivers a dramatic reduction in equipment on site. In turn, the footprint required, power consumption and cooling obligation are all decreased, and the installation is a simpler and less disruptive process too.

The technology lends itself well to smaller locations where space is limited, and is ideal for many office buildings.

Various organisations, such as WiredScore, assess how digitally connected a building is.

High quality mobile connections can significantly enhance your building's ranking and appeal to both current and prospective tenants.

In-Building Solutions can support this in a number of ways - not only to ensure reliable mobile connectivity, but also to future-proof the building.

## Signal Repeaters

**Another way to improve mobile connectivity within your building is with signal repeaters, designed to amplify and extend the reach and performance of existing cellular signals.**

They work by boosting the signal from outside the building and amplifying it, making sure that even areas with poor reception, such as stairwells or basements, get the coverage they need. By improving signal strength, repeaters help reduce the chances of dropped calls and enhance data speeds.

Just like DAS, repeaters can support multiple MNOs and frequencies, making them ideal solutions for smaller office buildings with multiple occupants. It doesn't matter which device or which service provider your tenants are using – they can expect the same quality of connection regardless.





# LOOKING AHEAD: THE CONNECTIVITY REVOLUTION

**The findings of this Building Better Connections report highlight a critical issue that cannot be overlooked. Poor mobile connectivity within commercial buildings is significantly impacting hybrid workers' productivity, job satisfaction, and overall work experience.**

Alarming, 40% of hybrid workers surveyed have even considered changing jobs due to persistent mobile connectivity issues, emphasising the risk of high employee turnover if these problems are not addressed. It's safe to say this will be a huge worry for employers.

For those across the commercial real estate and facility management sectors, these findings present both a challenge and an opportunity. Prioritising mobile connectivity in building design and infrastructure can optimise occupancy rates, enhance

property value, and contribute to a more productive and efficient workplace.

By embracing this challenge, commercial real estate and facility management professionals can not only meet the evolving needs of the modern workforce but also stay competitive in a rapidly changing market.

Creating workplaces that are efficient and future-ready help to contribute to the wider economy, support business growth, and enhance the UK's position as a leader in workplace excellence. The future of work is here, and it starts with building better connections.

To learn more about how Cellnex UK and In-Building Solutions can benefit your building, visit:

<https://www.cellnex.com/gb-en/technology/in-building-solutions/>

A man in a dark suit and glasses stands on a balcony, looking at a laptop. The background shows a modern building with large windows.

# DELVING INTO THE FINDINGS

The key findings from Cellnex UK's research:

## The connectivity challenge

- **60%** of hybrid workers surveyed have had to leave their office building to go outside to make a phone call due to lack of mobile connection.
- **70%** of hybrid workers surveyed have experienced issues with mobile connectivity when working in the office.
- **61%** of hybrid workers surveyed would like their employers to invest more in office mobile connectivity.
- Over a quarter (**27%**) of hybrid workers surveyed experience issues with mobile connectivity in the office two to three days per week.

## The effect on hybrid workers

- **72%** of hybrid office workers surveyed agree that issues with mobile connectivity increases stress at work.
- **74%** of hybrid office workers surveyed agree that issues with mobile connectivity affects their productivity.
- **86%** of hybrid workers surveyed reveal mobile connectivity is important in order for them to be able to do their jobs.
- **68%** of hybrid workers surveyed say poor mobile connectivity would deter them from going into the office.
- **63%** of hybrid office workers surveyed agree that issues with mobile connectivity makes collaboration with colleagues more difficult.
- **40%** of hybrid office workers surveyed would consider moving jobs due to issues with mobile connectivity.

## Methodology

**About the research:** All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from Censuswide. Total sample size was 2,000 hybrid workers in the UK. Fieldwork was undertaken between 25/04 – 02/05 2024.

## Contact Us

To find out more and book a meeting with our in-building connectivity experts, get in touch at:

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## Additional resources



Cellnex UK resource centre, collateral and case studies:  
[www.cellnex.com/gb-en/das-lp](http://www.cellnex.com/gb-en/das-lp)



[cellnextelecom.co.uk](http://cellnextelecom.co.uk)

Cellnex plays a key role within the telecoms sector enabling connectivity throughout Europe. In the UK, as the country's leading independent telecoms site partner, Cellnex provides critical national infrastructure & services to telecoms operators, emergency services organisations and many other enterprises.

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