

Women and Equalities Committee

Oral evidence: Misogyny in music, HC 317

Wednesday 19 April 2023

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[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Caroline Nokes (Chair); Elliot Colburn; Dame Caroline Dinenage; Carolyn Harris; Kim Johnson; Kate Osborne; Ms Anum Qaisar.

Questions 99-152

Witnesses

I: Jen Smith, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority.

II: Deborah Annetts, Chief Executive, Independent Society of Musicians, YolanDa Brown OBE DL, Chair, British Phonographic Industry, and Jamie Njoku-Goodwin, Chief Executive, UK Music.

Written evidence from witnesses:

UK Music [[MIM0037](#)]

British Photographic Industry [[MIM0038](#)]

Examination of witness

Witness: Jen Smith.

Q99 **Chair:** Good afternoon and welcome to this meeting of the Women and Equalities Committee for our inquiry into misogyny in music. I thank Jen Smith, interim CEO of the Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority—I managed to get that out—for attending the first panel of this afternoon’s meeting virtually. I hope that you can hear us okay, and that everything works effectively. Members of the Committee will ask you questions in turn, Jen, and if at any point you want to add anything, please feel free. It’s only you on this panel, so you won’t have to interrupt anyone else. It would be really helpful to start with a quick summary of what CIISA is and why you think it will be beneficial for women working in the music industry.

Jen Smith: Thank you, Chair. If I may, I will give you a brief overview of what CIISA is proposing to do. At our heart, we want to be a reporting line for behaviours of concern in the creative industries, because what is missing is a single point of accountability, to which people can report experiences that they have had or witnessed. That may lead CIISA to do investigations into those behaviours of concern.

In tandem with that, we will proactively offer services that we hope will upscale cultural norms of behaviour across the sector—things like mediation, dispute resolution and triage advice. If your concern is not one for CIISA but may be a criminal or employment law matter, we will refer you accordingly. Another service that we seek to provide is advocacy, particularly with regard to anti-discrimination measures and measures on the misuse of non-disclosure agreements. There are other positive interventions that we think CIISA can make, and that will help the industry to do better on how we engage with one another, and in terms of people’s lived experience. We will also provide data and insight. We will be able to capture reports of what is happening, and look at trends and analysis, so that other interventions may be made. We think that will be useful intelligence, longitudinally, to improve the experience of our talented workforce.

It is crucial to CIISA that we address a void and do not duplicate existing advice. We would not duplicate the support provided by unions and membership bodies, or any statutory provisions. We sit in a gap; we are addressing a set of concerns brought directly to us by a number of freelancers across the creative industries and key bodies.

In our first inception, we would serve the film, TV, theatre and music communities, and we have had strong support from the music sector. The Committee may have noted that in early March, UK Music, which is the lead body for the sector, announced their in-principle support for CIISA. We also have representatives of the music industry on the CIISA set-up team, to make sure that we are responsive to the nuance of music and the

issues faced by musicians. We have representatives from UK Music, Black Lives in Music, Help Musicians, and the ISM, who are supporting us with our legal processes.

We are also engaged with the live sector, because we know that so much of the harassment, bullying and abuse happens in a live setting—the creative industries are not a traditional workplace—and we are very pleased with the engagement and support that we have had from LIVE and their workforce, the BPI and, crucially, the Musicians' Union. The Musicians' Union are, by quite some margin, the largest body representing musicians in the sector. They have 33,000 members, and 90% of those are freelancers, so we are delighted to have their support.

If I may, I will just advise the Committee of where we are with our proposal so far. We are about a year away from going live. Our high-level proposals are clear. We have gathered good support from across the creative sectors, but we might not be able to answer questions about our procedures in detail today. We will go to the creative industries with a consultation in the coming weeks. We have made very good progress on the organisational side, and on the operating model for CIISA. That has been a very collaborative endeavour with key organisations, specifically for music but more broadly across the creative sector.

Q100 Chair: Thank you for that, Jen. You referred to the nuance in the music industry. One message that we heard from previous witnesses that we had in front of the Committee, and certainly from some of the roundtables that we did confidentially, was about how the culture in the music industry made people reluctant to come forward, scared to report, and worried about the impact that reporting would have on their career. Presumably CIISA has an ambition to change that. If so, how?

Jen Smith: Indeed. We are very conscious of the fear of victimisation, the power imbalance, and the precariousness for freelancers in terms of the provisions in the law. Freelancers fall through gaps at the moment in employment law. We are very aware of those issues. That is why we feel that a reporting line where you can report your concerns anonymously is a significant intervention. You can also report, on behalf of others, experiences that you have seen and behaviours of concern. CIISA will then be able to hold that information, piece it together and trigger an investigation, should they deem it necessary.

CIISA is about having the vision to believe that things can be better and the courage to do something about it. It is about collaboration—listening to those nuanced experiences that are specific to the music sector and the other sectors that we seek to represent—and innovation: taking the best of the regulatory and standard bodies in the UK, but tailoring our services and ensuring that they are in tune with the specific considerations of a broadly freelance sector. A gig economy might mean that you play one gig one night, but something might happen to you. That is still of concern to CIISA. We still want to know about that, and to take action, should that be necessary.



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Q101 **Chair:** You talked about filling a void, reporting lines, and providing a channel for people to report poor behaviour. Could you outline what you envisage the sanctions to be? Will there be any real power to do anything?

Jen Smith: We will make recommendations. An independent adjudication panel will be appointed to make those recommendations. At the moment, there is no accountability or any consequences whatever. People can move through the sectors with impunity in many cases. That is a significant problem, given the scale and seriousness of the issues, which no doubt the Committee have been shocked by.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is cancel culture. CIISA will offer fairness, due process and evidence-based decision making. It will get to the truth and to the facts. By virtue of our existence, we will have a deterrent value, and people will get to trust the integrity of CIISA through the consistency of our recommendations. We will give examples of what those recommendations might be; that will come later as we go into the consultation phase.

Q102 **Chair:** You say “make recommendations”. I am not being deliberately difficult here, but to whom will you make them?

Jen Smith: We believe that we are acting in the public’s interest and therefore we would make recommendations in the public domain as to what we think is appropriate. There would be sufficient learnings, but recommendations would be carefully calibrated, in terms of what is put in the public domain. We are clear that there is a need for accountability and consequences, but we would be sensitive to supporting the welfare of anybody involved in an investigation, and we would do that when we believe that we are acting for the public good and the safety and wellbeing of the public.

Q103 **Chair:** Does that effectively mean that the biggest tool in your armoury is naming and shaming?

Jen Smith: That is not the language that CIISA is using. We are talking about fairness and proportional recommendations. We will investigate and make recommendations that are proportionate to what has happened in the sector, but where we feel that it is a criminal matter, we will hand it over instantly to the police. Where there might be an employment law issue, we will hand it to an employment lawyer. There has to be accountability where there are serial perpetrators of harm, and some of that harm will be very serious but not criminal. There has to be a place to which people can report that, and we can take appropriate, proportionate and fair measures.

Chair: I will bring in Caroline Dinénage.

Q104 **Dame Caroline Dinénage:** Nice to see you, Jen. By their very nature, the creative industries often attract very young, ambitious people—talented people with a dream of success in competitive, cut-throat businesses. Over the decades, we have heard about pop bands that



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signed dreadful deals and ended up making zero money from long and successful careers, and about young women going into modelling or performing industries and being terribly exploited, or victims of some really quite appalling treatment. What do you see as your role in preventing that sort of stuff? To what extent is prevention part of your remit?

Jen Smith: It is absolutely core to CIISA's remit. We want to work alongside the important interventions that are happening already, but there needs to be one place that holds everything together. I spoke about some of the services that we would seek to provide in the first instance—mediation, dispute resolution, triage, advice, supporting people in their rights, if you like: letting them know that they don't have to suffer this, and that if something serious has happened to them, there is a place where they can go. Many of the freelancers who have contacted me directly who are at the start of their careers have said, "This is absolutely essential and necessary as an intervention. Get this done."

Q105 **Chair:** You said you were a year off properly launching. Could there have been another mechanism—maybe an existing body, an existing arm of the creative industries—that could have set up something similar faster?

Jen Smith: No, I don't believe that to be the case. This is a unique proposition. The point is that CIISA is a collaborative endeavour; we are bringing all the creative industries with us. That is significant in making sure that our proposals serve the communities that we seek to provide support to, so I don't believe that to be the case.

This is great innovation. The creative industries welcome innovation. We are already being asked about CIISA in other territories all over the world. This is a good news story for the creative industries, but it is essential that we be an independent body and that that is recognised, because that is significant in cultivating trust. I believe it is necessary that we should have a fresh approach and that we be built from scratch, and that is what we are ensuring.

Q106 **Kate Osborne:** Hello, Jen. You have mentioned fairness a few times. I want to ask you about funding. If CIISA is to be funded by a voluntary industry levy, to what extent will it be independent?

Jen Smith: It is a very good question, and I welcome it. The structure that we are emulating is that of the Advertising Standards Authority, which has a two-company model. We have been clear that we wish to investigate without fear or favour; the moneys will therefore be collected into a separate entity and dropped down into the main body of CIISA. It is essential, I believe, to have a two-company model to inspire confidence. As for the services that we provide, we believe, given the great engagement that we have had to date, that the industry will come forward on a voluntary basis and fund this, because there is a significant return on their investment to be had. On Caroline's earlier point, we are losing talent. We have retention issues and a skills gap in music and across the creative industries, because people are having a terrible lived experience. That is why CIISA provides a very strong return on investment and a very



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good solution. That is alongside the other good work that it has been doing to try to stem the tide of this.

Q107 Kate Osborne: When it comes to independence and fairness, how would CIISA effectively investigate allegations against the CEO of a record label that provides 25% of the funding?

Jen Smith: We won't know who is funding us because the money drops into a separate financial vehicle. There will be a separate, small, discrete set of directors who will administer the CIISA finance board, so we will not know the names of people who have provided moneys to us. That is an important point of principle, which is why I welcome the question.

Q108 Kate Osborne: Given the size of the problem, will CIISA have sufficient resources and capacity to investigate all allegations that it might receive?

Jen Smith: There are two types of investigation that CIISA will do. One will be the adjudication panel investigation, in which we will draw on a pool of independent experts who will look at what we describe as serious and complex cases. We anticipate doing about 20 of those a year. In tandem with that, our key stakeholders across other sectors have asked whether CIISA will provide a service where we could go in-house and do smaller-scale investigations; they would trust the quality, and have the assurance of CIISA doing that as an independent body.

We are modelling for a backlog of historical cases in the first few years of our operating, and we are building that into our plan; the scale of CIISA going forward will accommodate that. The point about providing a significant return on the industry's investment is that we imagine that CIISA's impact will mean that our proactive services will overtake our reactive services. We believe that we can make a positive intervention on cultural norms, how people engage with one another and how conflict is resolved positively. That is one of the reasons why we believe this is a really fundamental intervention to make.

Q109 Kate Osborne: What form of judicial review will be available to victims and alleged perpetrators involved in a CIISA investigation?

Jen Smith: We are alive to the possibility of judicial review and have built an appeals process into our investigation process.

Q110 Chair: Thank you very much for your evidence, Jen. I will ask you to send anything else in writing. Was there something else?

Jen Smith: No, I just wanted to thank the Committee for the opportunity to give evidence. We will keep you abreast of our progress.

Chair: Thank you.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Deborah Annetts, Yolanda Brown and Jamie Njoku-Goodwin.

Chair: Good afternoon and welcome to the second panel in this evidence session. We have Deborah Annetts, CEO of the Independent Society of



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Musicians, Yolanda Brown, chair of the British Phonographic Industry, and Jamie Njoku-Goodwin, CEO of UK Music. Thank you for attending. Members of the Committee will ask you questions in turn. If any of you wish to jump in on a question that another panellist has responded to, please just raise your hand.

Q111 **Ms Qaisar:** Thank you so much for joining us today. Yolanda, the “Counting the Music Industry” report found that 80% of UK label artists are male. Do you think that there would be less misogynistic lyrics in our music if labels had 50:50 rosters or quotas?

Yolanda Brown: Thank you so much for inviting me to be here. To give you an idea of the remit that I am speaking from, I am the chair of the BPI, and we are the representative voice for the record labels and recorded music industry in the UK—for 500 smaller, independent labels, as well as the major labels: Sony, Universal and Warner. We organise and own the BRITs and the Mercury prize, as well co-owning the Official Charts Company.

The important thing to think about with lyrics and music is that music is always going to be reflective of society and the experiences that our artists have been through. Having that balance would not really answer your question. Music can also talk about the experiences somebody has had, be it of a misogynistic kind or any other. It definitely is for the labels, not to censor artists but to ensure by law that everything is covered in that way.

Q112 **Ms Qaisar:** Thank you. Data suggests that an overall reduction in misogynistic lyrics may not be due to an increase in female artists—rather, it appears to have been driven by the change of language used by male artists. In a separate study by Stacy L Smith, it was noted: “For women songwriters and producers, the needle has not moved for the last decade...women of colour are virtually shut out of producing the most popular songs each year.”

I heard what you just said about gender quotas. What I am interested in is what steps can be taken to change the culture of misogynistic lyrics being the norm in society. I appreciate what you are saying—that people are producing these lyrics as part of their experiences—but as a Committee we are concerned about the rampant use of misogynistic lyrics.

Yolanda Brown: Absolutely so. Misogyny is in society, and across the board the fight is definitely needed to ensure it does not exist anymore. Could you rephrase the last part of your question for me?

Q113 **Ms Qaisar:** I was asking previously about gender quotas. What I am really looking for is an understanding from you of what steps can be taken within the industry that can change the culture of misogynistic lyrics being the norm. I remember years ago listening to “Blurred Lines”, bopping my head along to the song, because it is quite a good tune. When I took a step back, I looked at the lyrics and thought, “No—there is something wrong here.”



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YolanDa Brown: Absolutely so. The first part is the pipeline of artists into the industry and who we hear, making sure. You have stated the fact that there is a need for more women artists. The recording industry is working very hard to ensure that there are more women in the higher echelons of the organisations, as well as in A&R, which is the role of finding and developing new artists, and having more women in that position. I think it is really important that the industry is stepping up with lots of different initiatives to bring more women into A&R roles, so that they can really identify it.

You have hit the nail on the head there as well. The public are definitely calling out the lyrics, and the music that we hear. Then, the industry does react. We hear all the time about changes that artists make after the general public calling out lyrics that do not work for them. We should definitely encourage that and keep on doing so, and it will change the culture over time.

Q114 **Ms Qaisar:** Yes. Are there any specific steps that you could maybe allude to that could be taken?

YolanDa Brown: Yes, absolutely. We have most data from our major labels, because they have more resource. In terms of making sure, again, initiatives for A&R are really important. Also, in terms of producers, it is about ensuring training and workshops to bring people together to have this discourse. It is really important that we are having this discussion now. It filters back into the industry, and makes people aware and have ownership of the fact that we need to ensure that the music that people hear is what society is listening to.

Q115 **Ms Qaisar:** Thank you. Deborah?

Deborah Annetts: I just wanted to make the observation from our latest piece of research, which we published in September last year: women told us—and there were 660 respondents in total—that they felt that discrimination was endemic in the music sector. It was a truly horrifying experience going through all those various responses. I think the nature of some of those lyrics does have the effect of making women feel that they are not welcome, but it is not just in pop music.

I went to see “Katya Kabanova” in February, which was not an opera I knew, and I was horrified at the level of violence against the lead female character. Within opera, Charlotte Higgins has written that it is one of the most misogynistic art forms out there. It certainly is when you take the whole oeuvre together.

Some places, notably Italy, have been trying to tackle that through changing the endings of some of the operas, for instance, “Carmen”. Although you might disagree with that, in terms of whether it is true to the text, perhaps we do need to go back to some of those 19th century operas, in particular, and question the level of violence exacted against women.

Q116 **Ms Qaisar:** Thank you for that, Deborah; that was really interesting.



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Jamie, would you like to add anything?

Jamie Njoku-Goodwin: I would start by thanking the Committee for holding this inquiry. In recent years, there have obviously been huge strides forward, but misogyny against women is a huge problem in today's society.

I think the music industry has always prided itself on being a vehicle for social change, whether that is the relationship with the civil rights movement and just causes—it is something that lots of people in the sector really see as a responsibility for us to be promoting and championing. Making sure that we are making this industry as accessible and as inclusive, as diverse and as welcoming for women as possible is mission-critical for all of us. It is something we are really keen to be taking forwards.

We could probably split this issue into three. When we ask people in the sector and look at what the sector is finding, it is challenges women face in terms of individual acts of misogyny and harassment; it is the structures that exist within the industry that potentially prevent progression; and there is a wider debate about the role that representation of women has on society more broadly.

When we ask members and people who are speaking in the industry about this, what really comes through are the first two. If you look at evidence, and you have heard from lots of people giving evidence, there is no evidence of a causal link between misogynistic lyrics and actual violence against women and girls.

I would not want to trivialise those sorts of lyrics at all, but in the industry where we are really focused is on trying to make it as inclusive as possible for people, because what we are hearing from people in the sector is that it is the structures and the individual acts of harassment that are inhibiting their careers—that is where we as a sector have been focusing lots of our attention.

Now, if evidence emerges that we really need to be focusing our attention on lyrics, I would welcome that and we would have a proper conversation about it. But one of the reasons why a lot of the actions we have taken forward have not been around lyrics and misogynistic lyrics is that that is what we have been hearing from the sector.

Obviously, there is a separate question about offensive lyrics and inappropriate lyrics, and making sure there are warning labels on songs. There is obviously a balance between artistic freedoms for people to be creating artistic acts and outcomes, and the need for consumers to know what they are getting, and not suddenly being presented with things that they are not expecting. The record industry has done a lot in terms of parental advisory and warning labels.

As a sector, we are resolutely focused on trying to make this industry as inclusive as possible, and wanting to make sure we are evidence-led and are following where the challenges actually are in the sector.



Q117 **Ms Qaisar:** Did you say that there is no evidence to suggest that there is a link between lyrics and bad behaviour? It's not necessarily the link. It is the normalisation of the lyrics, when a young boy at the age of six or seven is in the back seat of the car, listening to the radio or the CD player—well, we don't really have those any more—or Spotify or Apple Music, and they are just singing along, and it just becomes normalised. We are looking at misogyny in music, but the Committee also has an inquiry into misogyny in sport. These things build up a picture of a young person's life.

Jamie Njoku-Goodwin: A previous witness, one of the academics, who had much more academic evidence than I have myself, raised the point with the Committee a few months ago. They said there wasn't evidence of a causal link, in terms of listening to misogynistic lyrics and then becoming more violent or changing attitudes.

Again, I am open to this. For us as a sector, we want to be looking at all the evidence and basically doing what is going to make the most impact. We don't want to be focusing on areas where it will have less impact, if there are other areas, like the structures in the music industry, where we can be generating much more positive change and supporting women, working across the sector. That is just to put that in context and to frame how we have been approaching it.

I would just say that, as you say, it is not just an issue that is facing the music industry. It is facing all sorts of sectors. In the music industry, we have all got a responsibility. Whether it is recording studios or songwriters or record labels or businesses or venue operators or promoters, this crosses the whole sector, and we do feel like we have all got a responsibility to do as much as we can to condemn, tackle and challenge misogyny across the industry and across society more broadly.

Q118 **Ms Qaisar:** Thank you for that. It is very clear from the three of you that you all want to see better representation of female artists.

However, some would argue that you cannot be what you cannot see. Only 34% of the artists nominated for this year's BRIT awards, which is obviously run by the BPI that you chair, YolaDa, were women. That figure is in line with the average over the last decade. None of the five nominees for the gender-neutral, best-artist award, introduced last year, was a woman.

I have a note of what the spokesperson said: "While it's disappointing...we also have to recognise that 2022 saw fewer high profile women artists in cycle with major releases, as was the case in 2021...These trends based around the release schedule are a feature of the music industry, but if, over time, a pattern emerges, then this puts the onus on the industry to deal with this important issue"—which I appreciate.

To clarify, how do we define "over time"? Do we wait one year, two years, five years or 10 years? On top of that, as a follow-up, is now not the time for record labels to achieve gender-balanced quotas in order to



tackle that?

YolanDa Brown: That is a really great question. Thank you for your research behind it, because I would have alluded to a lot of those things. “Over time” is definitely more than one year, or one cycle. It is really important to note that when that decision was made in 2022, the ambition of the BRITs was to stay relevant to its audience, to be inclusive. That is why the decision was made to go for a non-gendered “Artist of the Year”. Of course, in the first year, a female artist won.

It is also important for the Committee to note how the nominations work. As I said, we co-own the Official Charts Company, and we are abreast of all the data about releases. To get into that category, people have to have either a top 40 album or two top 20 singles, so it is the data of that year—which is why you alluded to the release cycle. There were 71 artists, and out of them 12 were women, in the 12-month period when the data was being collected. It is important to note that those 12 women, still there in the long list, go to our voting committee.

The voting academy is 1,200 people from across the music industry, be they artists, labels, publishers, retailers or journalists. Half of those who voted last year—for this year’s awards—are or identify as women, and nearly a third were black, Asian and minority ethnic. In terms of the balance of who is voting for that category, it is there. Every single year, we make sure that we look at the criteria for each category. That is important to note.

If we had not had that change to only having a non-gendered “Artist of the Year”, however, we would not be able to have this in-depth discussion, which has uncovered that there is a deeper-seated issue with getting more women into our industry. Now, we can put places and steps into action, to make those changes and to see better results.

When you say “over time”, I think that we need some time, because that helps us to have a good gauge of what the industry looks like. In turn, that triggers different actions within the industry to make sure that we can see the changes that we want. For that, time is needed.

Q119 **Ms Qaisar:** If we have “over time” unspecified and are still in the position of only men being nominated in that category, what steps could, for example, the BRIT Awards and the BPI take?

YolanDa Brown: Every year, we continue to look at eligibility and criteria to make sure that we can get better representation. It is also important to note that that is one category so, when we talk about criteria, for example, we should not overlook that Wet Leg had four nominations in that round or that 42% of the nominations overall were women or groups made up of or mixed with women. It is a point that we need to focus on and make sure that the balance is struck right over time, but we also need to make sure that we speak to fellow organisations in the music industry to ensure that everyone understands how that comes about.



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Jamie Njoku-Goodwin: To echo some of what Yolanda said, it is important to start off by recognising that this came from a really good place. There were criticisms from non-binary people who did not have a specific gender identity that they were being locked out of award categories by having a male or a female category.

The change essentially came from a place of wanting to make the awards as inclusive and open as possible to people of all gender identities. As Yolanda says, it touches on the point in your previous question about the fact that 12 artists out of the 71 shortlisted were female. That speaks to a wider issue within the sector that we need to have more support for female artists. Interestingly, that statistic of 18% is very similar to the statistic that you heard in a previous session about there being 17% female songwriters.

There is a structural problem where we do not have enough female songwriters, performers and potential award nominees coming through the sector. If we continue saying that every year we are going to celebrate the best female artists, we wouldn't be seeing that. We wouldn't be having this debate right now. I welcome that we are actually debating this issue; it has shone a light on it. As an industry and a sector, we can say, "Right, there is an issue here. What can we be doing to change that?"

Across the sector, we are taking action to try to support women more within the industry—on the front of the stage, behind the stage and in different roles around the sector. I think it is important to set out that context, because some people have an image of these sorts of award categories as what they sometimes were 100 years ago: a load of old guys with cigars in rooms, deciding who wins these things. That is actually not the case; there is a whole process around it. But there are structural factors that artists are still facing, which is why you are seeing these sorts of disparities.

Q120 **Ms Qaisar:** Thank you. Deborah?

Deborah Annetts: I want to add again that this is a bigger issue than just the pop industry. Research from Donne has uncovered that about 7% of the music played within the classical sector, on the concert platform, has been composed by women or women who identify as women. So about 93% is coming from the male canon. What that does is send the message to the female sector that, "Actually, you are not wanted."

If I go back to what our research uncovered, it is still the case that women are told, "If you want to get ahead, you have to sleep with the person who has influence over your career." By and large they are freelancers, so they have very few rights. If they say anything, they will not work again. That is where the power imbalance lies.

By and large, 93% of the ISM membership is freelance and 65% of our membership is female. They tell us what happens to them. They cannot go and report it to anybody, whether CIISA exists or doesn't, because of a fear of reprisals. Until we tackle the level of victimisation that happens



within the sector, women are not going to feel able to make their careers as they would wish.

Q121 Ms Qaisar: Thank you, Deborah, for shining a light on the parts of music that are not just pop. I came to this Committee session just thinking about pop music, and the issue is clearly wider than that. Very quickly, do you think the mechanisms in place to improve and tackle misogyny are different between different genres of music?

Deborah Annetts: I don't think so. I have a background as an employment solicitor, so I spent 15 years of my life doing things like discrimination cases in the tribunal. Discrimination is discrimination, no matter which genre you are looking at. It is all pretty much the same stuff.

To my mind, whether it is in the pop industry or the classical world, you have a lot of people in powerful positions who are by and large men, but not always. There is also an imbalance of power when it comes to NDAs. A lot of senior women who lose their jobs are subject to NDAs and they can't speak out. So you have freelancers who can't speak out because of fear of reprisal, and senior women who can't speak out because of what may happen to them. That is the sector we are working with. I was shocked when I came into the sector 15 years ago. I did not expect it to be like this, but it is something I have learnt is endemic.

Q122 Ms Qaisar: Have you seen improvements over those 15 years?

Deborah Annetts: I think it is getting worse.

Q123 Ms Qaisar: Why?

Deborah Annetts: That is a really good question. When we did our research in 2018, that was our first report. It came off the back of Weinstein, because we started to get phone calls from our members saying, "Can I tell you what happened to me?" I met those women and heard what they said. I went to my board and said we had to do some primary research, and we had about 500 responses. We found that the level of discrimination was about 47%. When we did the same research last year, it had gone up to 66%. Now, I do not know what is happening but the issues around victimisation remained exactly the same. Non-reporting had increased, so people are now more scared to report; I think that may be a function of the pandemic because work is even more scarce and therefore you are even more worried about how you can keep a roof over your head.

I also wonder about the impact of social media. I am not sure whether that is a good thing. I think the music colleges have still not necessarily got their heads around equality in relation to how they deal with issues around discrimination and harassment, and the actual curriculums that they are delivering. Looking back over the research we did in 2019, "Dignity in study", which was across all types of music college, but also included drama and dance, we saw that the inappropriate behaviours



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started within those creative colleges, were learned and then went into the profession; and there is no protection.

Q124 **Ms Qaisar:** I am playing devil's advocate, but do you think that someone could argue that it has got worse over the years because people feel like they can speak about it a little bit more?

Deborah Annetts: You may be right, because I had women coming up to me and saying, "Thank you, Deborah. I can now tell you what happened to me." I had an email from a woman who had a terrible experience—I must try not to cry at this point—in the 1950s. She had told no one and felt she was now able to say it. We had about a thousand responses from women who were deeply emotional about their experiences in the music sector, which is why I am so grateful to this Committee for investigating, because we need help.

Q125 **Chair:** Thank you for that. I am not going to breach any confidences, but I know that the Committee did some individual roundtables with women working in the music industry and some of us were absolutely stunned at the tales that we heard from music colleges, academia and the classical sector. Is one of the problems—I think this may have been used in an open Committee session—that the music industry has not yet had its #MeToo moment, that the NDAs are still sticking and that we have not had a Zelda Perkins who was willing to break an NDA?

Deborah Annetts: I think you are absolutely right. I had a woman come to me two weeks ago asking if I could look at her NDA; could she publicise what had happened to her? I took it to my legal team—we have got six lawyers working in my organisation—and the advice was: no, the NDA was still good and she could not breach it. So we haven't had our #MeToo and I think it is the use of NDAs, but also the fear of reprisal and that you will not work.

Q126 **Chair:** That is the message that we have had from numerous women: it is the fear of reprisal. Yolanda, can I just come back to you with a question? You pointed out the 12 and 71, so the 17% who were eligible for the best artist award. Before you made the decision to make the switch to best artist, did you run that maths over previous years to understand what the impact would be?

Yolanda Brown: I cannot speak personally; I have just got into the role. I am eight months in, but it has been fed back to me that, yes, that is the case. That is where, as stated before, the release cycles come into effect because you can run the data and, if you change the eligibility dates by a few months, it will give you a different result. But there has to be an eligibility period. Yes, the numbers were run and there were different scenarios. That is exactly what is happening now and happens every year, just to make sure that the results will be reflective of what the music industry is celebrating, for want of another phrase, in that award.

Q127 **Chair:** I will push you on the question that Anum asked and that I do not think we got an answer to: what period of time? If we see 17% of eligibility over 5 years, 10 years or 20 years without a woman winning



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that category, how long is it going to take before it is reviewed?

YolanDa Brown: It is being reviewed every year; let me just make that clear. Every year after the awards, whether a woman wins or not, it is being reviewed. Take the data we have at the moment: it has been two years and, in one of those years, a woman has won, so at the moment that would lead you to think, "Well, let's see what the third year brings."

Also, I am hoping that as we look each year at the results we can see a systemic change, not just for the Brit Awards and what that looks like, but: "Oh, we're seeing more women artists coming through. Oh, those initiatives might be working."

Q128 **Chair:** You knew that it was going to happen. You knew that there was this imbalance in the first place. What are the underlying reasons for the exclusion of women from label rosters, and do you see the labels doing anything to tackle that?

YolanDa Brown: I see the labels doing a lot to tackle it, especially in terms of having more women in senior positions. I think that this will hopefully also help. Calling out activity that we are hearing about, having more women running labels and making sure that that conversation is happening at the top level is already happening. We have more women in the senior leadership team than ever before. This also equates for the BPI. They haven't had a female chair. Now, I am the female chair. Also, our interim CEO is a woman, and our incoming CEO is a woman. We are seeing that change happening across the board, in initiatives like transferring a woman from her position to A&R and making sure that new talent is coming through.

Women looking for women, and understanding what is needed for that artist, will be instrumental. In turn, the suggestion of signing an artist will be going to the label head, who is a woman, who will also see what that looks like for the industry. I think we will see changes coming. A lot of training is happening within the industry. Support for mental wellbeing and for women during different times in their lifespan will also help in turn. I can see you are adding it up, Chair. That will make a difference along the way. It is an industry, and people are all working together. It is important to note that the Brits as an awards show is celebrating what it has to work with.

Q129 **Chair:** Yes, I get that. In five years' time, if we rerun those panels with female artists do you think that we will hear a different message?

YolanDa Brown: Which panels, sorry?

Chair: The panels that we did where we were hearing about women feeling that their careers were more vulnerable. They felt excluded. They were finding it harder to get signed and harder to stay signed. Do you think that the measures that are being taken will mean that, if we run those in five years' time, we will hear that things are different?

YolanDa Brown: I would hope so. That is exactly the ambition of these different initiatives.



Q130 **Chair:** What are the metrics that you have put in place to measure that?

YolanDa Brown: To measure—

Chair: To measure how many women have been signed; whether having more women in A&R has actually changed anything. Are you measuring it?

YolanDa Brown: At the moment, at the BPI we don't have the data from the labels, but I think that we will see that, in turn, from the different statistics that come through on songwriters and producers. From the chart positions and the Brits as well, we will be able to come to those numbers.

Q131 **Kim Johnson:** I want to pick up on the different initiatives that you mentioned on recruitment and the retention of A&R representatives, picking up on what the Chair has just mentioned, and how you are gauging how successful that is. What does success look like?

YolanDa Brown: As I said at the start, the members we represent range from SMEs, independent labels through to the majors. Obviously, we can collect more data from the larger organisations, which have more resource. It is interesting to see. I have spoken about women in A&R. Universal has a great programme that makes sure that it can get more women in A&R and train them up to go through this programme, and in effect that they are offered employment afterwards, which is important. It is all well and good to train and tell people about the role, but it is also about offering positions.

It is about support for childcare, for example, support for the menopause, mental wellbeing support, and forums where women can come together and speak and feel like it is a safe space for them. Those provisions are there. This also extends to the artists. That best practice, and showing that best practice filtering out throughout the industry, will make a change along the way.

Q132 **Kim Johnson:** Do the record companies have opportunities for apprenticeships? Is there positive action to recruit women into those roles?

YolanDa Brown: Absolutely, and they also feel accountable. They have EDI managers, so that every time employment is happening, they can make sure everything is being checked over. It is about that pipeline and progression, and about making sure we can retain women in the industry. When situations are shared, there can be understanding and change.

Q133 **Carolyn Harris:** You mentioned menopause, which is what I would like to talk about. I was very pleased to see that UK Music had done a survey this year, and I think that nearly 12% said that they were experiencing either perimenopause or menopause symptoms. Over half said it affected their work, and 76% had taken time off. Fifty-five per cent. of the respondents were in senior roles in the industry. How are you retaining women in the music industry workforce? Most sectors are now proactively trying to retain and attract talent into the industry. What is the music industry doing to retain and attract talent among menopausal women?



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Jamie Njoku-Goodwin: I am really glad you asked that. This is from our diversity report from a few months ago. It came in after we submitted evidence, but I have a copy here that I can leave with the Committee. We collect data every two years looking at the make-up of the industry. There were 2,980 responses, and the patterns and shifts we are seeing are quite fascinating. 63.3% of those in entry-level positions are women, so women are coming into the industry in quite high numbers, which is fantastic. As you go up the chain, you start to see that number drop off slightly. As you get to senior level, that is where you start to see problems retaining people; women aren't staying in the sector.

There are two main issues. Childcare is a huge one when you ask women what is happening. Parents and carers are very underrepresented in the music industry: 29% of people in the music industry have caring responsibilities, compared with 44% of the UK population. One of the problems is that the sector is not set up well for them. I am not a parent or a carer, but those who are tell you that it often involves late hours, freelance work and insecure working environments, so it can be difficult to sustain a career in that sort of environment.

You often have a situation of women leaving the sector, partly because of the challenges they are facing relating to childcare. Identifying that has been a really big thing for us. What can we do as a sector to support women? That is happening at different levels—at a trade body level, where we are recommending and suggesting things that organisations can be doing, and even at an organisational level. Sony Music UK has introduced a childcare package, which is up to £15,000 for employees, and it has equal parental leave. It has essentially recognised that the sector is losing people because of the challenges they are facing in childcare.

That is not just in the music industry—we are seeing that across the economy—but as a sector we want to identify what the challenges are that are leading people to leave the sector. Childcare is one of them, and menopause is another. It was a shock and a surprise to me personally—I am a man, so I haven't really had to think about this before—to hear the stats that you quoted back at us. The one that was most shocking for me was that 7% of those women—

Carolyn Harris: Didn't go for promotion.

Jamie Njoku-Goodwin: Yes. Well, they didn't say anything to their employers—nothing at all. As an employer, it horrifies me to think that there might be people working for me who are facing these challenges and I don't know about it so I can't give them help and support, and I can't make sure we are being supportive as employers.

On the menopause, we set out in our report that there is much more that the industry can do. You can have a menopause policy. Most organisations don't set out what they should do for women going through the menopause. They don't say what those women are entitled to, and what they would like them to be doing. We should say to organisations, "You should have a menopause policy and support those who are experiencing



the menopause.” You see that drop-off happening; it is something that is happening to the majority of women in the industry.

We spoke to people as we were conducting that research and heard stories about them turning down work and leaving the sector because they felt they weren’t getting support. That is a huge problem for us as a sector, and I think there is a real moral responsibility for us to be giving support to people. But to be hard-nosed and commercial about it, think about the talent you are losing from the sector. Think of the people who are moving into other sectors in which it is probably much easier for them to sustain their lifestyle, have caring responsibilities and have support with things such as the menopause—things that the music industry has not historically really been thinking about. As a sector, I think we want to do a lot more on this because we think supporting the workforce is the right thing to do, but it is also in our interests, bluntly, to do more to make sure that we are retaining and keeping people in the workforce.

Q134 **Carolyn Harris:** That is lovely. You talk about support, but what actual support have you built? What have you done? Have you encouraged menopause policies? Have you worked with organisations to develop them, and what do they look like? What value added is there to these policies? How is that communicated?

Deborah Annetts: Can I jump in? I would love menopause policies across the sector, but most of the sector is freelance, and therefore they will never come anywhere close to a freelance policy. We are still seeing situations in which women are sacked because they are pregnant if they are freelance. That is a reality. If they do not look right—if they have a bump that is showing—and they are in some kind of musical, they will lose that job, let alone thinking about menopause policies.

There is something about the image that women are asked to aspire to in music. You have to look right. If you look a bit older, you might not look quite right. There is a lot of stereotyping that goes on in the music sector. I think it would be fantastic to have menopause policies, but it is not enough to have the policies. You then have to deliver them, and there have to be consequences for non-delivery. We keep coming back to the point that, at the moment, the legislative framework is not up to the job in relation to making sure that people are properly protected. That is the fundamental issue.

Q135 **Carolyn Harris:** Can I come back to you, Jamie? What more are you doing other than offering support and talking about policies?

Jamie Njoku-Goodwin: In UK Music, the organisation that I run, we are going through this process at the moment. We are working up and working out what staff need, what that looks like and what that should be. It is something that is almost quite new to us, and I recognise that it is not something that we have really done before. I totally agree with Deborah’s point about the freelance nature, which should not be underestimated—70% of the sector is freelance.



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There are lots of things that we can do and which we can ask employers to do. We can put more responsibility on businesses and organisations. The freelance nature of the industry means that, although lots of these issues and challenges are not unique to the music industry, the unique nature of the music industry often exacerbates them and makes them much more pernicious across the sector. We are looking at what more we could be doing. I know that it is not enough just to say, "We'll have a menopause policy" and that's it. There is a wider culture change that we need to be shifting across the sector more broadly.

Q136 Carolyn Harris: I take your point, Deborah, when you say that it is about image. I totally take that on board, but some of the loudest voices calling out the inadequacies in menopause care are people who are in entertainment. They are out there; they have a fantastic platform. You have access to other women who will have a fantastic platform. Have you thought about engaging with them? You have talked about discrimination in terms of the casting couch. Why aren't you proactively working with women in the industry to call this out? Then we could be in a position to get regulation and legislation that protects women, rather than just accepting that we are trying our best but there are so many other problems.

Deborah Annetts: We did, as a sector, write to Kemi Badenoch, setting out a whole series of recommendations and asks, including legislative change, which would give us better protection, because of the freelance nature of the workforce. I totally agree that it has to be a two-handed approach. It has to be the sector getting its house in order, which is, as you can hear, because of the freelance nature of the workforce, very difficult, but we also need legislative change across a variety of areas.

Menopause policies are absolutely fantastic, but many musicians literally go from place to place. There will hopefully be a menopause policy in one place, but then not tomorrow with a wedding band doing a gig for a happy couple getting married. That is one of the issues in the sector. It is such a transient workforce, which is why it has to be a cultural shift, as well as legislative change. It is only if people understand that you cannot sexually harass because there are consequences that we will get anywhere.

Q137 Carolyn Harris: Two things here: first, would you be happy to share that letter? I am sure the Committee would like to see what you were asking the Minister for. Secondly, I have been contacted by both Equity and the Musicians' Union with a view to working with them on putting something together. I would be more than happy to extend that conversation to anyone who is interested in being part of it, and seeing if we could come up with something proactive that would support the women in your sector.

Deborah Annetts: Absolutely, I think MU did sign the letter. along with 700 other organisations and individuals. It is fairly comprehensive. We got a response back saying, "No, we are not going to make any legislative change."



Carolyn Harris: Calm, calm. Thank you, Chair.

Q138 **Kim Johnson:** Deborah, you mentioned the extreme power imbalances in the music industry, with men having the power, wealth and privilege. The music industry is failing to support women because of the precarious nature of the contracts, and is failing particularly around maternity, childcare, and the work that women do. What practical steps can the Government and industry take to improve this, other than writing to Kemi Badenoch?

Deborah Annetts: I will start with the legislative changes. In the equality legislation, there is quite a lot of confusion over whether section 83(2) covers depping musicians. That is the first legal issue. We have taken a barrister's advice on this, and there is a question mark over whether it properly protects freelancers, which is why we wanted a small change in the equality legislation. Third-party harassment was on the statute books until about 2014. We are very keen for the Bill that is, I think, in the House of Lords to get through. We are very keen to get third-party harassment back on the statute books.

There are two other pieces that are slightly nerdy from an employment law perspective. One is the reintroduction of discrimination questionnaires, which are incredibly useful for getting at culture. The other one is the extension of the period for bringing complaints from three to six months. I know as an employment solicitor that so often, people come to you when they are virtually out of time; it makes it incredibly difficult to protect their legal interests. That is the legislative framework.

On culture, there is a lot that the sector needs to be doing. The first point is on transparency. There is a huge number of membership organisations across the sector. When we surveyed them, only 30-odd per cent. had codes of practice that you could easily get at. The point of a code of practice is that it could be useful in regulating the membership. That brings us to the consequences for inappropriate behaviours. When the ISM realised the scale of the issue, we changed our internal regulations, so that if an individual came to our notice as having bullied, harassed or transgressed in relation to discrimination, the ISM could then discipline them and remove them from the membership. It is really important that there is a causal connection between behaviour and what happens to you. We would urge all organisations to have a similar set of procedures that regulate their membership.

We also think that funders in the music sector—there are all kinds of funders, from the Arts Council to the Helen Hamlyn Trust—should make it a condition of funding that people be trained on their rights and obligations in relation to discrimination. That, we think, could start shifting culture. It is not enough to train the employees; you have to train the freelancers, because otherwise the freelancers take their own views on culture from place to place.

I was doing a session at the Association of British Orchestras back in February, and it became apparent in a seminar that the orchestras were



training all the employees, but nobody had thought to train the freelancers. That is where so often the music industry has this little blind spot around tackling where those behaviours might be coming from. There is a raft of things we could be looking at, both legal and cultural. I also think the music colleges—I am not just talking about classical; I am talking about the whole raft of them—need to have a very good look at themselves in terms of the behaviours that they are projecting as acceptable. I am not saying that they are all bad by any means, but I know from the work we have done that sometimes, you can have inappropriate behaviours becoming embedded, and those need to be tackled. It needs a multifaceted approach, so that it becomes culturally unacceptable to discriminate, harass, etc., in our sector.

Q139 Kim Johnson: Those were some really good examples of practical steps, but I would be interested in whether you could identify where any of that has been implemented.

Deborah Annetts: We certainly implement our code of practice; we have terminated membership. It's not pleasant, but you have to do it. You have to stand by your code. We also entered into a code of practice with the MU, which I think has close on 130 signatories, and we have run training courses on both rights and obligations, and we try to give people the confidence to come forward if they are facing discrimination, but we come back to the victimisation point.

Q140 Dame Caroline Dinéage: Deborah, what concrete evidence is there that your code of practice for the music sector has deterred misogynistic behaviour?

Deborah Annetts: I would say absolutely none at all. If you look at the data that we have collected, it has been a resounding failure, since we introduced it two years ago, because on that data, the evidence is that the situation is getting worse.

Q141 Dame Caroline Dinéage: Right. So you think that the way to address that is, on top of the codes of practice, to have the legislative and cultural changes that would make it—

Deborah Annetts: Absolutely. I just don't think our sector takes much notice of codes.

Q142 Dame Caroline Dinéage: That is really helpful, because I want to talk about the support available for women in music, and to specifically focus on the harassment, discrimination, sexual abuse and exploitation. As you have heard from some of my colleagues, we have done a number of roundtables and taken evidence on this. As you said, Deborah, it is horrifyingly prevalent across every single sector, from classical, opera, the music colleges, right the way through to electronic music, DJs, songwriters, pop, etc. What really concerns us is, as Jamie articulated, this extreme power imbalance at a senior level, which is dominated massively by white heterosexual men.

The evidence we have taken from so many organisations in the music industry talks about how much BPI and UK Music care about this; your



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passion for this is indisputable. You talk about the resources and the support that is available, but the evidence we are taking from the women out there is that the support is “limited”, “laughable”, not known about and unavailable, and that people are completely unwilling to report incidents. With that in mind, Yolanda, the deputy music editor at *The Guardian* wrote that it wasn't in labels' interests to allow misconduct allegations to oust their executives. To what extent is that true?

Yolanda Brown: It is important to note that the BPI and its members really want to make a change, and to see change across the recorded music industry, which is why I alluded to the initiatives and why we want to make sure that there are channels for people to come forward. I think that demonstrates that we want to see that change, and we are working really hard to make sure of it. The BPI has been doing a a body of work to really understand the experiences of women in the music industry, and not just to get data—we can talk about data till the cows come home—but to develop some actions alongside our members, the labels, to make sure that we see that change. That piece of work will be coming out in the coming months, but I think that is the important thing. Data is great, and it is really good to keep looking at the numbers, but what is the action? As with the 10-point plan from the UK Music diversity taskforce, it is about signing up to these things, making sure we are all held accountable, and seeing that change over time. Again, I know my statement of time is not favourable today, but there are a lot of things to undo.

On the transcripts, you remark on how the industry has been seen—stale and pale, and whatever else—but actually we are starting to see that change. Getting people into those positions is the first step, and then the action follows. I think we are starting to see a time of action, and to see these codes of conduct really holding people to account. You will be in board meetings where people are challenging each other, and I really welcome that. As I have said, I have been in this position for eight months, and I can go into meetings and see those conversations happening. It is a challenge, and it is something on which actions need to be taken and are being taken.

Q143 **Dame Caroline Dinenage:** Talking about right now, so many women said to us that reporting any of this sort of behaviour was effectively professional suicide. If somebody working at a label that the BPI represented was being sexually harassed by the label's CEO right now, what would you advise them to do?

Yolanda Brown: I would advise them to come forward. If they do not feel safe doing so internally, there are also independent bodies that they can turn to. The labels also make sure to signpost that to all employees, because if it is not spoken about or discussed, how do we challenge it? The labels make sure that all employees understand the channels through which to take action if they are aggrieved, and what can be done, and I think it is important to do so. *[Interruption.]*

Q144 **Chair:** Order. I will have to suspend the meeting, because we have a Division in the House.



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Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.

On resuming—

Chair: We are good to go. Back to Caroline Dinenage.

Q145 **Dame Caroline Dinenage:** Jamie, do you think that the industry will commit to investing more in organisations that will support female artists if they need the kind of help and advice that Yolanda spoke about? This is the issue. We have talked about it being career death. We have talked about there being really no encouragement for women to speak up if they have experienced this. Do you think that the industry would be prepared to invest more in making this work?

Jamie Njoku-Goodwin: Absolutely. A number of organisations do fantastic work on this. I hear from people who have gone through the ISM process and been supported by the MU who had a very positive experience and feel they have been really well supported. One of the challenges is that you speak to some people who say, "Yeah, it's fantastic. This organisation was really helpful." You speak to others who say, "Oh, wait. You can go there? I'm not a member of that organisation," or, "I didn't know that existed." There is a challenge. Some fantastic things are happening across the sector, but it is slightly patchwork and does not cover the whole of the sector.

We have the five Ps, which is about how we can diversify and make our sector as inclusive as possible. That is across all protected characteristics, but a key part of that is on partnerships—urging and advising the sector to invest in organisations, but not just ones in your geographic locality. It is about partnering with organisations across the country, and outside your networks. It is very easy to say, "We know that person runs this organisation or business. We can support them," or, "We know them. We can support them." Actually, there is a challenge about how we do this across the country as a whole, and across the sector as a whole.

We will probably come to CIISA in a little bit, but that is one of the reasons why we have been working with CIISA, which has been trying to do this across the creative sector. Obviously, a lot of these challenges are not specific to the music industry. We are seeing lots of these challenges across the whole sector. In answer to your question on funding organisations, absolutely. It is the sort of thing you hear a lot about. There are organisations that we fund and support. There is funding that happens across the sector. The problem is, first, that it is slightly patchwork and, secondly, going back to Deborah's point, which we cannot forget about, the freelance nature of the work. We have to make sure that the 70% of people working in the sector who are freelance, and not attached to an organisation, have recourse through these organisations and schemes and can see the benefit of them.

Q146 **Dame Caroline Dinenage:** How do they promote the fact that this exists, particularly for freelancers? A survey by Cactus City showed that just over 60% of respondents did not know or barely knew of any support



available. How do you get the message out there?

Jamie Njoku-Goodwin: It is a job for us to promote that a lot more. As Deborah says, there are ways you can make sure that organisations working with freelancers are signposting, advertising and pushing people towards organisations. It is another conversation that we are having with CIISA. A lot of work is going on in the sector that is really good, and we do not want to duplicate or rub up against the brilliant work that CIISA is doing. A big part of the work that we want to do with them is to make sure that they can plug the gaps and fill the vacuum, but not duplicate or rub up against a lot of the good work that we are seeing from organisations across the sector.

Q147 **Dame Caroline Dinenage:** CIISA is still a year away from being operational. What is happening to the women who are experiencing this every day, Deborah?

Deborah Annetts: Thank you very much, and thank you, Jamie. It is, again, a multifold problem. First, the woman has to know that the advice and support is out there. MU and ISM are both funded by our memberships, so in order to get the advice from ISM, you have to become a member, which means that, if you are a student, you have to pay £17 per annum, which is not that much; it goes up to £180 per annum. That gets you access to our six lawyers. We take 2,000 legal cases a year, which shows how active our legal team is. In addition, we run two charities, one of which offers counselling care, again to the members. The ISM Trust provides a huge amount of professional development in relation to understanding what is actually happening to you in the workplace. I know that the MU does something very similar, but it is not enough because of the elements that we are up against.

I want to touch on something called fixers. I do not know whether fixers have been mentioned before. They are the people who basically hand out the work. They will have a little list of people whom they think they can trust. That basically means somebody who has never complained about anything at all. If you complain about something, you will be crossed off the list, because you will be seen to be difficult, so the nature of fixers' work—it is prevalent right across all genres—makes it incredibly difficult for women to raise an issue. The most they can hope to get is counselling rather than protecting themselves legally.

Q148 **Dame Caroline Dinenage:** What is the answer to addressing the fixer issue?

Deborah Annetts: Again, it goes back to culture. The fixer issue is very difficult, because it is such an integral part of the way in which work is handed out. That does not mean that there are open auditions; it is literally who you know. It is like the wild west. It is totally different from how you would experience a normal workplace, and if you have kept your nose clean, never been difficult and done everything that you have ever been asked to do, you will probably stay on the fixer list. If you have made a complaint—say, that somebody touched you—you will come off that list. That, again, is really problematic for our sector. It goes back to



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cultural issues, changing culture, and legislative change. That is why I am slightly sceptical about CIISA, because I am not sure that it will generate the level of change that we need. I think we need more than CIISA can possibly deliver for our sector.

Q149 **Dame Caroline Dinenege:** Yolanda, what were your thoughts on that?

Yolanda Brown: I think the idea of cultural change is really important. The BPI, along with colleagues, have been working on a best practice framework for the whole sector to sign up to. The definition of bullying, harassment and discrimination sounds simple, but it is really important that everybody can recognise it and knows where to signpost to. Then the sector, which, as we have been saying, has so many pockets to it—there is so much in the ecosystem—can come together and have the same ideas and understanding of what bullying and harassment is, and signpost to the amazing Help Musicians support line, the anti-racism code delivered by Black Lives in Music, the MU safe spaces, and CIISA when it finally gets off the ground, so that everybody is pointing in the same direction, which I think culturally is important. *[Interruption.]*

Chair: Thank you for finishing that sentence. I have to suspend the meeting again. We will run and come back.

Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.

On resuming—

Q150 **Elliot Colburn:** Deborah, you have mentioned your concerns about CIISA. To what extent have your concerns been addressed, if at all? Could you also add anything about your concerns with CIISA that you do not feel you have had the opportunity to raise already?

Deborah Annetts: I have been talking to Jen Smith over the past nine months, I guess, about CIISA, because I have concerns about its structure. It is non-statutory, so it cannot levy things like remedies, which you can through the tribunal. I think it also risks displacing the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which is a properly funded Government body that probably needs more funding than anything else, so that it can carry out, say, investigations into the music sector.

I am also concerned that because CIISA does not have statutory enforcement powers, it lacks teeth, so perpetrators will continue to get away with it. The most it can do is name and shame, and that is not enough, in my view. I think that it will also confuse people, who might think to themselves, “I’ve been to CIISA; I will get justice,” but they could find that, having gone to CIISA, they are out of time, because they have only three months to bring a claim in the tribunal. For all those reasons, together with some governance issues, I do not believe that it will give us the framework we need in order to see change in our landscape.

I have spoken to CIISA numerous times. I even have my director of legal sitting on its taskforce to try to address some of our concerns, but that still has not happened. That concerns me.



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Q151 **Elliot Colburn:** Yolanda and Jamie, this can almost have a yes or no answer—obviously with bit of elaboration. An ISM report strongly advocated for organisations to undertake training on their obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Are the organisations that you represent willing to undertake that?

Jamie Njoku-Goodwin: There has been an appetite and a desire across the sector to do more on this, and organisations are all looking at what more they should be doing. I probably need to look at the exact thing it would be, but in principle, absolutely, there is appetite, not least because the members of a lot of the organisations we represent want to have as inclusive and as positive an environment to work in as possible. In principle, our members are keen to do everything they can to address this issue.

Yolanda Brown: I definitely think that we are fully committed to tackling bullying and harassment. Having those conversations is important, and we should have them.

Q152 **Chair:** Deborah, you mentioned the EHRC. How much of an appetite do you see them having to champion cases and take them up on behalf of complainants?

Deborah Annetts: They are very interested in doing an investigation into the music sector. I am meeting them in May.

Chair: Excellent. More action from them would be appreciated on the issues that we face.

If there is anything else that witnesses would like to send us in writing, please feel free to do so. The evidence this afternoon has been incredibly helpful—some of it was a little bit alarming—and we have very much appreciated your contributions. Thank you very much.