



Women and Equalities Committee

11 February 2026

Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority

Dear Secretary of State

The Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority (CIISA) is vital to tackling discrimination and abuse in the creative industries. As our inquiries into misogyny in the music sector have made clear, women remain subject to appalling levels of harassment, exacerbated by power imbalances and a lack of protections, particularly for those outside of regular employment structures. Across the creative industries, the economic burden of bullying, harassment and discrimination is an estimated £1.8 billion a year, impacting a third of the workforce.

CIISA is not yet fully established, but already many people from across the creative industries have approached it for support and to report abuse. We are very concerned that CIISA is being asked to undertake its duties with one arm tied behind its back.

Public Interest Disclosure

Two years' ago, our predecessor committee called on the Government to address legislative barriers that may prevent CIISA from operating effectively, a call we reiterated in our follow up report last year. In September 2025, the Government told us:

officials are exploring whether CIISA is a suitable addition to the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 2014. This is the secondary legislation listing the bodies and individuals that a worker can make a qualifying disclosure to in order to receive protection from dismissal or detriment in their employment on whistleblowing grounds.

It is frustrating that discussions on this issue remains ongoing. It is clear to us that CIISA is a suitable addition.



Women and Equalities Committee

- I would be grateful if you could confirm that CIISA will be added to the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order and, if so, the process and timescale for making that addition.

Funding

From a starting base of £65,000 CIISA has made enormous progress in getting to the point that it is almost ready to launch services. However, despite operating in an industry worth £124 billion to the UK economy, it continues to be hampered by a lack of sustainable funding.

In evidence to us on 4 February, CIISA raised concerns on the lack of statutory protection on income as part of its funding model. CEO Jen Smith told us that of 36 standards authorities across the UK that are backed by industry, 'all of them have some form of protection on income, such as a levy or a reserve power. CIISA does not.'

CIISA has recently moved from a levy model to one based on registration, but it remains the case that, without a regulatory backstop on income, it lacks the stability required to advance its work at the pace needed. It also means that already limited resources are having to be diverted towards fundraising.

In its response to our most recent report, the Government said, "We expect the sector to support CIISA and the Secretary of State reserves the right to intervene if this is not forthcoming."

I also note your commitment to the Culture, Media and Sport Committee that "I have made it clear that if in the future we believe it's necessary for this to become statutory, that is something that the government is very open to." The Women and Equalities Committee strongly feels that time has come. The work of CIISA fits within the Government's mission to halve VAWG; it would be fly in the face of that mission to let it fail.

- Will the Government introduce a reserve power on funding to give CIISA the sustainable funding model it needs, in line with other industry-backed bodies?

Non-disclosure agreements and third party harassment

Freelancers make up the vast majority of the creative industries workforce, yet do not have access to the protections from harassment available to employees. This is evident in the legislation on protections from third party harassment and on non-disclosure agreements. My committee campaigned for and welcomed the inclusion of the ban on



Women and Equalities Committee

non-disclosure agreements in the Employment Rights Bill. Secondary legislation will set out the scope of the ban. I am writing separately to the Secretary of State for Business and Trade to call on him to ensure that the secondary legislation will bring freelancers within the scope of the legislation banning misuse of NDAs.

A copy of this letter and your reply will be placed in the public domain.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Owen MP
Chair, Women and Equalities Committee

Cc: Dame Caroline Dinenage, Chair, Culture, Media and Sport Committee
Jess Phillips, Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls