

## **Written evidence from Sony Music UK [MiM0052]**

Thank you again for giving Sony Music UK the opportunity to inform the Women and Equalities Committee's inquiry into Misogyny in Music. We support the Committee's work and were pleased to be able to share more about our ongoing efforts to make the music industry safer and more accessible for women.

At Sony Music UK we are constantly looking for ways to support women working in the recorded music industry. We have made significant investments in this area and are proud to offer an industry-leading suite of initiatives, from our ground-breaking childcare support scheme – paying up to £15,000 per year per employee toward childcare costs – to our appointment of a Director of Artist and Employee Wellbeing, who provides holistic and comprehensive in-house support. While our sphere of work relates specifically to recorded music, we also aim to increase representation through our UK Social Justice Fund, which includes initiatives to improve gender balance across the industry from electronic music to tour technical skills. As I said to the Committee in the oral evidence session, we at Sony Music UK are working hard to improve diversity but there is always more to do and we remain determined to tackle underrepresentation wherever possible.

Please find below Sony Music UK's responses to the further information requested by the Committee. I have also included information on our policies aimed at levelling the playing field for women in the music industry. We are firmly committed to rooting out misogyny – as well as all forms of discrimination – and will continue to work within our industry and beyond to drive meaningful change. I hope that the information provided reflects our ambition to achieve this.

### **Roster gender diversity**

By way of background, it is important to note that our roster includes many artists at varying stages of their careers, which can mean fluctuations occur from year to year. The current year represents an extremely exciting time for women artists, as they make up most of Sony Music UK's priority artists for this period. In the chart performance of Sony Music's tracks in the UK bestsellers year to date (as at June 2023), 60% of Sony Music tracks in the Top 20 bestsellers have featured all women or non-binary artists and 20% have featured one or more women or non-binary artists. Just 20% of tracks featured only male artists.

More generally, 2023 is proving to be a strong year for women artists. In the first half of 2023, tracks featuring at least one woman took 73% of the number 1 spots and tracks featuring exclusively women took 58% of the number 1 spots.

### ***Current UK frontline album artists***

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify the statistics regarding our roster. By nature, the rosters within our individual labels are constantly evolving, and it is important to note the difference between frontline (ie artists who are actively signed to us and delivering new recordings) and catalogue artists (ie artists who are no longer actively signed), as well as the difference between artists signed to single deals or long-term album deals. Services offered to artists also vary greatly, from full service to distribution only. For these reasons, we have focused on our 110 current UK-signed album artists, to ensure the numbers are an accurate and consistent representation of our UK business. Based on these criteria, our most recent UK roster breakdown shows that 38% of our artists are women, 1% are non-binary and 61% are men. Please note that our website includes a much broader range of Sony Music global artists (including those signed to local companies around the world), both past and present, active and catalogue, it is not a specific representation of our current UK frontline album artists.

The Committee also requested information on our rosters from five and ten years ago, by way of comparison, and I am pleased to report that from 2013 to 2023, there has been a 50% increase in the total number of women signed to our UK frontline album artist roster.

Applying the same criteria regarding UK frontline album artists as described above for the labels which remain active in 2023, we can see that the comparative roster breakdowns for five and ten years ago show:

- 2013: 41% women and 59% men
- 2018: 30% women and 70% men

In terms of the data requested on breakdowns of each act, it would not be appropriate to list our current UK frontline album artists as some are newly signed (and details are not in the public domain) while others are nearing the end of their contracts or may be negotiating new contracts. This is why our website provides more general information about Sony Music artists, representing a range of frontline and catalogue artists, both in the UK and internationally, and those who have previously released music with Sony even if they are now signed elsewhere.

While there has been progress in terms of the total number of women artists on our roster, I would like to reassure the Committee that we are determined to continue this trajectory, which remains a priority for us. We have several initiatives in place with that aim in mind. As I mentioned in my oral evidence, these include Sony Music's A&R Academy and internship programme, projects to increase access to music education and skills through our UK Social Justice Fund and industry partnerships, and more senior women than ever in our labels as well as in our creative and corporate teams.

### **Senior management diversity**

As referenced in the recent session, we have been working hard to improve the representation of women at a senior level across the business and have introduced several policies designed to enable women to progress in their careers. To that end, women currently make up 55% of our senior management team (SMT). People of colour currently represent 30% of the SMT, with 15% women of colour.

In order to balance our employees' rights to privacy and to avoid a potential data privacy/GDPR issue we respectfully request that we provide the requested data as a percentage.

### **Gender pay gap**

The Committee has asked for clarification on the gender pay gap information I provided. Our median gender pay gap in 2022 was 15.9% – 1% above the 14.9% national average for the median pay gap in the same year, according to the UK Statistics Authority's Office for National Statistics data [Gender pay gap in the UK: 2022].

In the past financial year, the proportion of women receiving a bonus was greater than the proportion of men receiving one: 75.3% of women received a bonus, compared to 64.1% of men. We are also pleased to see a reduction in the mean bonus gap in comparison to last year, which reflects our continued appointment of more women into senior positions.

### **Exit Interviews**

Finally, there was a question from the Committee about how long Sony Music UK has been conducting exit interviews. I can confirm that we formalised our process for exit interviews in 2017 and have a consistent practice where employees who are leaving are invited to complete a written exit interview online via an external company, Last Opinion. All employees are also invited for a face-to-face exit interview with a member of our People Experience team.

### **Policies to support women**

I thought it might be helpful to provide a short summary of the various policies mentioned to the Committee. I hope the information below is useful in demonstrating our commitment to helping women remain in the workplace and progress in their careers by tackling some of the most significant barriers they face. Please do let us know if you would like any further information on any of these policies.

- **Menopause:** We are committed to ensuring that any employee who may be suffering from menopausal symptoms feels empowered to request adjustments that could help improve their experience at work. By creating transparency and encouraging more dialogue about the menopause we hope that people will feel more confident to ask for the help they need. We would also like to clarify that people experiencing the menopause may be entitled to paid time off, should they require it.
- **Childcare support:** Our landmark policy, introduced in October 2022, is a pioneering initiative that provides employees with funding towards the cost of childcare during working hours. We offer grants

tapered by salary toward childcare costs for pre-school aged children, up to a maximum per employee of £15,000 per year, which ensures that lower and middle earners benefit from higher funding.

- **Equal parental leave:** From October 2021, regardless of gender, sexual orientation or how someone becomes a parent, all employees are eligible to receive the same time off and pay in the first year of their child's birth – up to 52 weeks. While we know that normalising this change takes time, we believe that offering equal leave for all parents will lead to better career development for all genders and greater work life balance when it comes to parental responsibility. This policy replaces our pre-existing maternity, paternity and adoption leave policies.
- **Neonatal leave:** We were the first private company in the UK to bring in a neonatal policy, which is an industry-leading support package for parents and adopters whose baby is born prematurely, which includes leave at 100% of base salary from the date on which the baby was born prematurely to the start of their parental leave package.
- **Pregnancy loss:** Sony Music is committed to supporting all employees who suffer the loss of a pregnancy, regardless of the nature of their loss, whether it happens to them directly, to their partner or their baby's surrogate mother. From October 2021, any employee who may experience this will be entitled to take three weeks of paid leave, alongside access to other support measures.
- **Domestic abuse:** During the pandemic, cases of domestic abuse increased and routes to safety for those affected were reduced. We recognise it is possible that some employees might be affected, and we want to create a culture where our staff feel comfortable raising difficult issues, with the assurance that we will handle it with care and in confidence. In collaboration with the charity Women's Aid we trained members of our People Experience team and employees to understand how domestic abuse may present itself in the workplace and how to support anyone affected.
- **Safety/travel:** Sony Music pays for all employees to get taxis home if they are working after 9pm or travelling to/from company events after usual office hours.

Many thanks again to the Committee for the opportunity to provide evidence in this important inquiry. We value diversity and equal opportunity and are committed to supporting inclusive teams. Much of our work in recent years has focused on implementing progressive policies and initiatives to level the playing field for women in the UK music industry, and we remain committed in our efforts towards this goal.

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