

## **Written evidence from John Shortell, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, The Musician's Union [MiM0003]**

The MU would like to see action from Government to support the music industry to tackle issues of misogyny, sexual harassment and discrimination more widely. The MU recommends:

- Implementing the recommendations from the Misogyny in Music report in full.
- Increased and sustainable funding for the music industry to tackle issues of misogyny, sexual harassment and discrimination more widely.
- Support for CIISA in the form of sustainable funding via a levy or eligibility criteria.
- For CIISA to be a proscribed person to enable them to provide advice to people who have signed NDA's. We understand an application has been sent to The Department of Business and Trade.
- Grant CIISA Data Protection statutory exemptions that will enable them to hold and use data for legitimate aims.
- A regulatory backstop or other provisions to enable CIISA to conduct investigations without the concern of SLAPPS (strategic litigation to avoid public participation).
- Making childcare tax deductible for self-employed people.
- Bring Maternity Allowance in line with Statutory Maternity Pay.
- Extend Shared Parental Pay to self-employed workers.

The MU provide continue to provide the [Safe Space](#) service that provides an opportunity for anyone working in the music industry to share instances of sexism, sexual harassment and sexual abuse in the music industry. Since publication of the report, we have received over 40 disclosures just via our Safe Space service.

These disclosures range from sexual harassment in all its forms to sexual assault and rape. We also have a dedicated Womens Musicians Network where MU members where MU members can build community and discuss issues impacting their work.

Support for women musicians exists in terms of career progression from organisations such as [Keychange](#), [PRSF Women Make Music](#), [We are the Unheard](#), [Mothers Write](#), [GENIE](#) etc. All of these organisations rely on funding and a lot of the projects that aim to support women in music are staffed by volunteers.

These initiatives still exist within a system that doesn't prioritise women's safety and none of the organisations have the power to change that culture. The music industry can't rely on these small organisations alone to change the culture of the music industry or improve its diversity.

While there is some support for women in music, quite often in the form of schemes and initiatives mentioned above, there isn't enough funding for them to have a large-scale

impact. Once women enter and progress in the workforce, they experience a range of barriers that men either don't experience or don't experience at the same levels.

The industry needs more funding to create impact at scale. This means overarching, ongoing initiatives that not only seek to improve the diversity of the workforce but transform the workplace itself, this looks like -improved policy, recruitment practices, career progression opportunities, robust reporting processes, leadership development schemes etc rather than projects that repeatedly seek to "build awareness" without a follow up or measurable aims/objectives.

The Musicians' Union, Association of British Orchestras and Black Lives In Music created a [10 point plan for inclusive recruitment](#) for the orchestral sector to help improve recruitment practices and increase the diversity of orchestral musicians.

33 orchestras have signed up to a 2-year program that will review their recruitment practices provide a comprehensive training package to ensure that where diverse musicians are hired, they are entering workplaces that are ready to receive them with good practice in place to prevent and tackle misogyny, sexual harassment and discrimination more widely.

There's an ongoing evaluation of the process to ensure that the project is impactful. Designing more equitable recruitment process benefits people of all backgrounds and all genders.

Funding is a major issue for the music industry. Many organisations from grassroots music venues to festivals and orchestras are in crisis mode, fighting to survive while cutting back on staff and creative output. This can mean that vital work to change the culture of the music industry is deprioritised.

Whilst the MU advises and supports organisations to better protect our members, it's often after an incident of discrimination and/or sexual harassment has taken place. An organisation such as CIISA whose sole focus is on preventing these behaviors and supporting people who experience them is crucial.

The most effective strategies to improve culture are data led and engage everyone as part of the solution. Using data, such as the large data set from the Musicians Census to design interventions that measurably improve diversity, standards of behaviour and outcomes for people who experience discrimination should be more widely encouraged.

Music industry organisations must be assessed not only on if they have committed to tackling misogyny but if they are measurably achieving progress. The MU sees some organisations within the music industry engage in work to improve culture and diversity that signals commitment without really demonstrating any results.

Holding employers and engagers accountable is an effective way to accelerate this change. Again, this is where CIISA could be transformational as an independent body resourced and equipped to do this.

The overwhelming feedback on the Misogyny in Music report from the industry was the acknowledgment that misogyny is endemic. Unfortunately, the Conservative government didn't take any action that was recommended by the report. There was momentum in the industry, hopefully there still is, to accelerate change regarding the way women are treated. The last government's reaction to the report deprioritised this work.

There has been some good practice from organisations such as LIVE who have established a misogyny in music working group to support their membership to prevent and tackle

misogyny. They have provided training to support their members in tackling the issue, but the large scale change we desperately need hasn't yet materialised.

Since the publication of the Misogyny in Music report the MU published the [Musicians' Census: Women Musicians Insight report](#). The stats confirm the ongoing issues in the music industry and highlight a gap in support that CIISA could fill.

### **Discrimination statistics:**

- 87% of women report experiencing or witnessing discrimination of some kind while working in music.
- 51% of women report experiencing gender discrimination while working as a musician. Only 11% of women reported it.
- 47% of women from the Global Majority reported experiencing racism. Only 8% of women who experienced or witnessed racism reported it.
- 32% of women report being sexually harassed while working as a musician.
- Women from the Global Majority, Disabled women and LGBT+ women experience this at higher rates than their white/non-disabled/heterosexual counterparts.

Reporting remains a major barrier to tackling the issue. Many organisations can't act on anonymous reports or reports of incidents that didn't happen within their organisation. Ultimately women still do not feel safe enough to report.

The MU are concerned about the ongoing anti- ED&I rhetoric and backlash. We feel it has the potential to reduce support for initiatives that seek to increase diversity and inclusion and are concerned that funding will be directed elsewhere. This type of rhetoric has the potential to deprioritise this work and ultimately, it's women and other minoritised communities who will suffer.

We would like a commitment from the government that there will be a robust strategy to fund, support and prioritise ED&I initiatives in the music industry and the people doing this work, to ensure that we can move forward.

The MU are fully supportive of the Worker Protection Act and appreciate that the legislation is still very new. However, the MU are concerned that as the Act is dealing with issues of inequality, sexual harassment and discrimination and may be perceived as less urgent or critical in certain contexts.

Compliance with the new legislation requires additional resources, including time and financial investment. Small businesses and those operating in challenging economic environments, like most of the music industry, may struggle to allocate the necessary resources to implement the requirements effectively.

Advice from the EHRC exists but this should be provided with practical examples of how compliance could be met in a scalable way.

Unlike the Health and Safety Act, the new amendment may not have received the same level of attention in terms of education and training. Many people might not fully comprehend their rights and responsibilities under this new legislation, leading to breaches and a lack of reporting.

The effectiveness of the new legislation depends on enforcement and accountability mechanisms. The Mu would like to see an increased budget for EHRC to enable them to

undertake enforcement activity and begin to investigate how industries, staffed largely by freelance workers, can comply with the act so it is truly preventative.

Our concerns remain that some of our members may fall out of the scope of the Worker Protection Act as they are freelance workers.

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