

Dignity at work: a survey of discrimination in the music sector

An interim report

**Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM)
Wednesday 6 December 2017**

ISM
INCORPORATED
SOCIETY OF
MUSICIANS

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Background to the ISM survey

The ISM is the UK's professional body for musicians. Founded in 1882, we champion the importance of music and protect the rights of those working within music through a range of services, campaigns, support and practical advice. We are a wholly independent, non-profit-making organisation.

We support almost 8,500 members who come from all branches of the profession and work across all genres and disciplines.

In the wake of recent revelations regarding inappropriate behaviour in many different settings, concerns have been raised in the music sector about incidents of discrimination including sexual harassment.

The ISM is committed to working on a collaborative basis to improve the workplace for musicians and to secure change on a long-term basis. As part of this approach, the ISM is seeking to understand the extent and nature of these issues which will help us formulate practical solutions to change the workplace for the better. In November 2017, we launched a survey which asked musicians to offer their suggestions as to how we can improve the culture and conditions in which all musicians work, and to share their personal experiences with us on a completely anonymous basis.

All ISM members have access to confidential advice from experienced in-house employment lawyers by contacting the ISM legal team at legal@ism.org or by contacting our 24-hour advice line on 01275 376 038. The ISM also runs a counselling helpline on 0800 042 0136.

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About the survey

The survey of the music sector, open indefinitely as we continue to map the extent and nature of these issues, was launched on Thursday 2 November 2017. This interim report covers data received by the ISM from **Thursday 2 November to Monday 27 November 2017**.

Within that time frame the survey received more than 250 responses.

We asked respondents to tell us the settings in which they work. They are as follows (as is the case with portfolio musicians, many respondents have selected more than one choice):

- **66.67%** of respondents stated they work in a school or other educational environment
- **44.83%** of respondents stated they work in a small ensembles or band
- **33.33%** of respondents stated they work in a choir or choral setting
- **31.82%** work in an orchestras or another large instrumental music ensemble
- **27.97%** of respondents stated they work as a session musician or recording artist
- **24.14%** of respondents stated they work in a conservatoire or music college (in further or higher education)
- **16.48%** work in musical theatre

47.89% of respondents selected 'Other' as the environment in which they work which covered a wide range of settings.

In addition to the survey, respondents had the option to complete an equality and diversity monitoring form to help further our analysis.

63.92% respondents identified themselves as female, **20.00%** respondents identified themselves as male, **0.78%** defined themselves as transgender and **15.29%** did not disclose their gender.

70.59% respondents identified themselves as heterosexual/straight, **7.45%** identified themselves as lesbian/gay/bisexual, **0.78%** identified as other and **21.18%** did not disclose their sexual orientation.

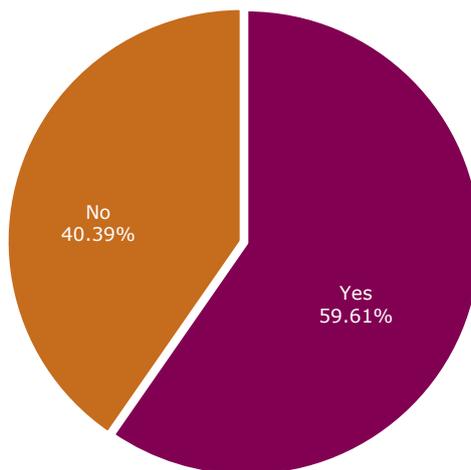
The breakdown of the respondents' age:

- 16-22 = 1.18%
- 23-34 = 16.48%
- 35-49 = 27.06%
- 50-65 = 27.84%
- 65 and over = 9.80%
- Did not disclose age = 17.64%

Part 1: Interim survey results

59.61% of the respondents stated that they had experienced discrimination, including sexual harassment or inappropriate behaviour, in the course of their work as a professional musician. **71.71%** of these respondents identified as female, **17.10%** as male, **0.66%** as transgender and **10.53%** did not disclose their gender.

Have you experienced discrimination in the course of your work as a professional musician?



71.03% of respondents who reported they had experienced discrimination and defined their employment status at the time were **self-employed** and **28.97%** were **employed**.

45.39% of these respondents identified locations where their experience of discrimination and/or inappropriate behaviour took place.

The top three locations identified were within an orchestra or ensemble, including touring bands (30.4% of those defining an alleged perpetrator) and within a school setting (20%) and within a conservatoire or music college setting (17.4%). Other locations identified were within music venues, churches, opera companies and musical theatres, universities, recording studios, private teaching settings, work events and cruise ships.

Types of discrimination and inappropriate behaviour

In addition to sexual harassment and/or inappropriate behaviour, eight of the nine types of discrimination as defined in the Equalities Act 2010 were disclosed. This includes **gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, race, sexual orientation, age and disability**. Discrimination on the basis of **mental health** and **appearance** was also disclosed.

7.23% did not disclose their exact experience and **13.81%** identified more than one type of incident in their survey response.

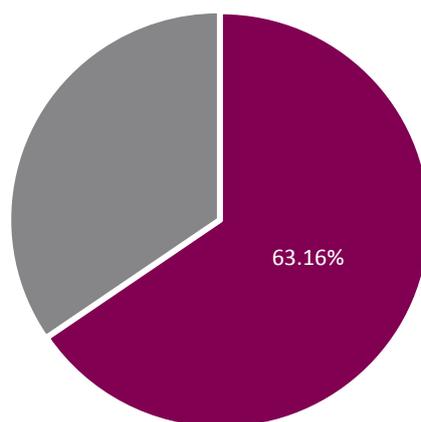
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Sexual harassment

(Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. It has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a worker, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Sexual harassment can happen in any number of ways, including written or verbal comments of a sexual nature, such as remarks about an employee's appearance, questions about their sex life or offensive jokes, displaying pornographic or explicit images, emails with content of a sexual nature, unwanted physical contact and touching, and sexual assault.¹)

63.16% of the respondents who said they had experienced discrimination or inappropriate behaviour in the workplace and provided details reported experiencing **sexual harassment**. Examples include 'groping from instrumental teachers', 'inappropriate advances and sexual comments from older colleagues', being 'sexually harassed and mentally and physically abused' in early employment, being 'expected to engage in 'casting couch' or flirtatious behaviour' and being a victim of indecent exposure from a 'famous musician'.

% of those reporting discrimination who identified it as sexual harassment



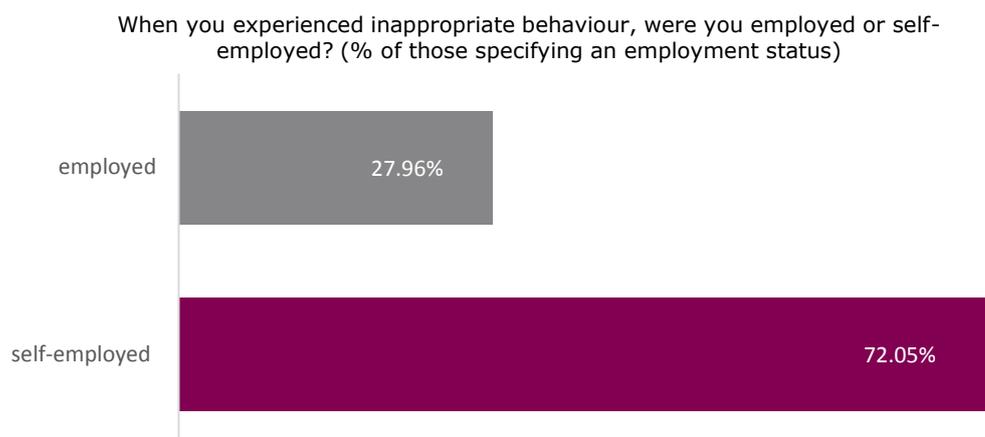
10.53% of these respondents had experienced rape (unlawful sexual activity) and/or sexual assault (unwanted sexual contact). This included attempted rape 'by a fellow musician', 'smacking' from senior colleagues, and 'being molested whilst on tour'.

82.29% of these respondents, identified as female, **9.38%** identified as male and **8.33%** did not disclose their gender.

96.88% defined their employment status at the time of their experience. Of these respondents, **69.79%** said they were **self-employed** and **27.08%** were **employed** and **3.13%** did not specify their employment status.

¹ [Definitions taken from Acas' website, Monday 4 December 2017](#)

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59.5% of these respondents identified a location. The top three locations were identified as within an orchestra or ensemble, including touring bands (28.57% of those identifying a location), within a conservatoire or music college setting (23.2%), and within a school setting (16.1%).

Other locations included at a music venue, university, recording studios, theatre settings, private teaching settings, choir settings, opera companies and industry events.

68.08% of these respondents defined alleged perpetrators. The highest percentage identified was the respondent's fellow musician or 'equal' colleague (25% of those defining an alleged perpetrator), with the teacher (18.25%), conductor (12.5%) and famous or influential musicians (including soloists) (9.45%) also identified multiple times. Others identified were members of the public/audience members, Head of Departments, older colleague/senior colleagues (not boss), fixers, directors, bosses, students and orchestral managers.

Did they report their experiences?

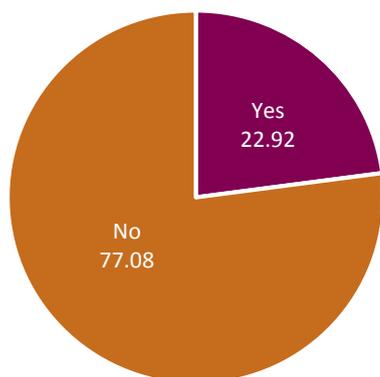
96.88% of the respondents who had experienced sexual harassment within their work as a professional musician **answered whether they had reported their experiences or not.**

22.92% of these respondents **did** report their experiences. Of those who reported their experience, **81.82%** identified as female, **13.64%** identified as male and **4.55%** did not identify their gender. Of those that specified their employment status, **71.43%** stated they were **self-employed** and **28.57%** stated they were **employed.**

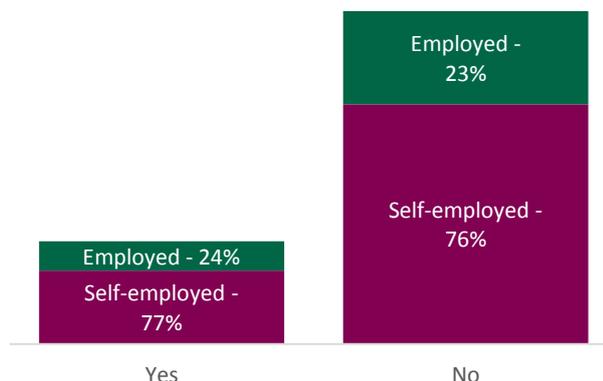
77.08% of these respondents **did not** report their experiences. Of these, **82.43%** identified as female, **8.24%** identified as male and **9.46%** did not disclose their gender. Of those that specified their employment status, **72.06%** stated they were **self-employed** and **27.94%** stated they were **employed.**

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Have you reported the incident?



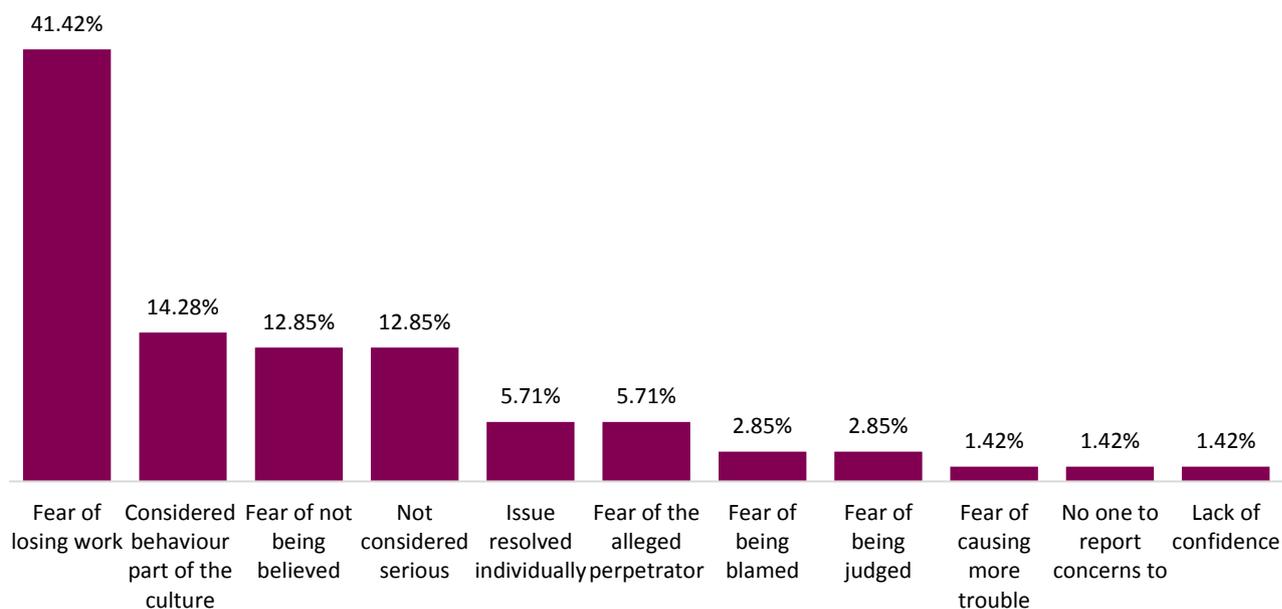
Have you reported the incident?



77.78% gave a reason why they didn't report their experiences. Some gave more than one reason for not reporting. Reasons identified were (percentage of those giving a reason):

- Fear of losing work = **41.42%**
- Considered behaviour part of the culture = **14.28%**
- Fear of not being believed = **12.85%**
- Not considered serious = **12.85%**
- Fear of the alleged perpetrator = **5.71%**
- Issue resolved individually = **5.71%**
- Fear of being blamed = **2.85%**
- Fear of being judged = **2.85%**
- Fear of causing more trouble = **1.42%**
- No one to report concerns to = **1.42%**
- Lack of confidence = **1.42%**

If you answered no, what did you feel was preventing you from reporting your concerns?



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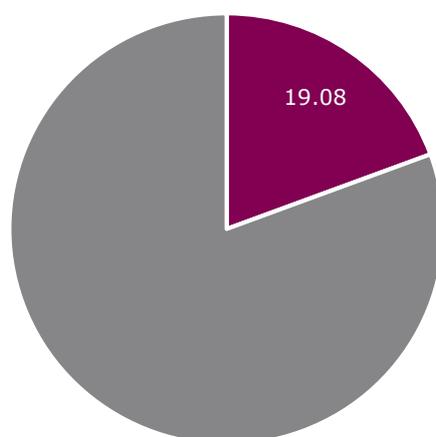
Gender discrimination and inequality (including gender reassignment)

(Defined as prejudice or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender.)

19.08% of the respondents who said they had experienced discrimination or inappropriate behaviour in the workplace (and provided details) reported experiencing discrimination and inequality on the grounds of gender.

This included being told that 'a woman could never play as well as a man'; being treated as 'the stupid young girl who doesn't know anything'; being 'paid less than male colleagues despite doing the same work'; and being 'told that I'm not welcome, that I need to change, ignored, put down'.

% of those reporting discrimination who identified it as gender discrimination



82.75% of these respondents identified as female, **10.35%** as male and **3.45%** as transgender. **3.45%** did not disclose their gender.

61.90% were **self-employed** at the time of the incident, **23.80%** were **employed** at the time of the incident and **14.30%** did not disclose their employment status.

42.85% of these respondents identified locations where this took place. The top four locations were within a church (33.33% of those identifying a location), within a conservatoire (25%) and within a rehearsal (16.66%) or in public (16.66%). Other locations included within schools, venues, studios, pit bands and within an audition setting.

50% of these respondents defined alleged perpetrators. The top two identified were the respondent's fellow musician or colleague (42.85% of those defining an alleged perpetrator) or by the person engaging them for work (including fixers) (42.85%). Others included parents of students, teacher or lecturers, by students, by a senior colleague and by members of the public.

Did they report their experiences?

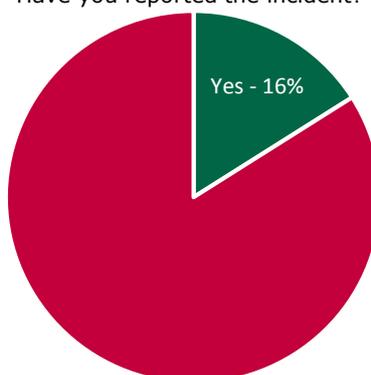
86.20% of the respondents who experienced discrimination and inequality on the grounds of gender in the workplace **answered whether they had reported their experiences or not.**

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16% did report their experiences. **100%** of these respondents identified as female. **75%** were self-employed and **25%** were employed.

84% did not report their experiences. **85.71%** of these respondents identified as female, **9.52%** identified as male and **4.76%** identified as transgender. **66.66%** were **self-employed** at the time of the incident, **23.80%** were **employed** at the time of the incident and **9.54%** did not disclose their employment status.

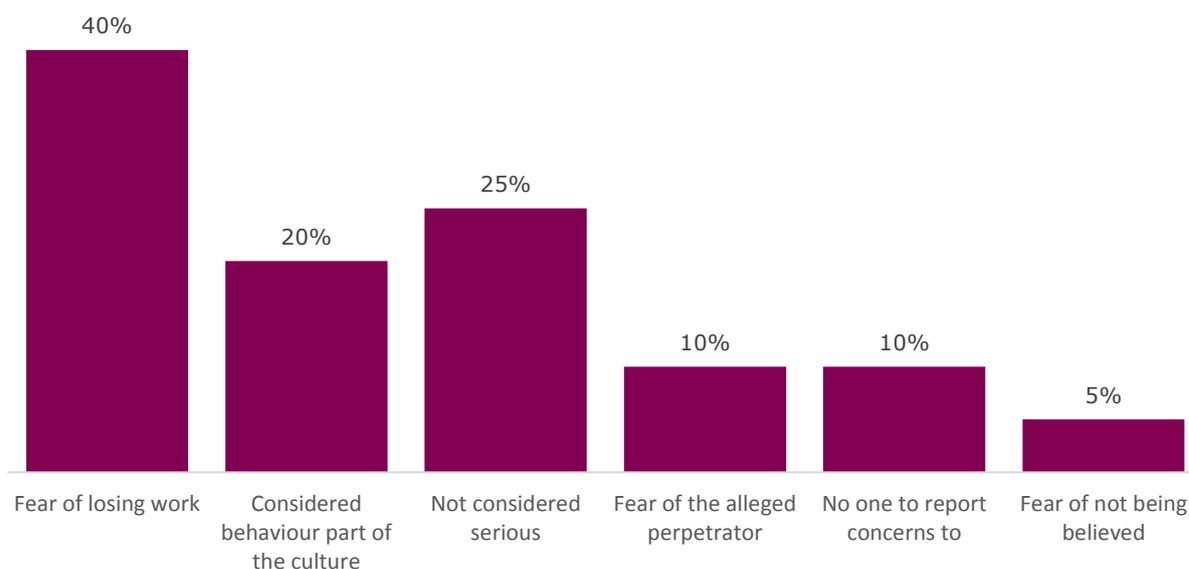
Have you reported the incident?



95.23% of these respondents gave a reason for not reporting their experiences. Some gave more than one reason. Reasons identified were (percentage of those giving a reason):

- Fear of losing work = **40%**
- Considered behaviour part of the culture = **20%**
- Not considered serious = **25%**
- Fear of the alleged perpetrator = **10%**
- No one to report concerns to = **10%**
- Fear of not being believed = **5%**

If you answered no, what did you feel was preventing you from reporting your concerns?



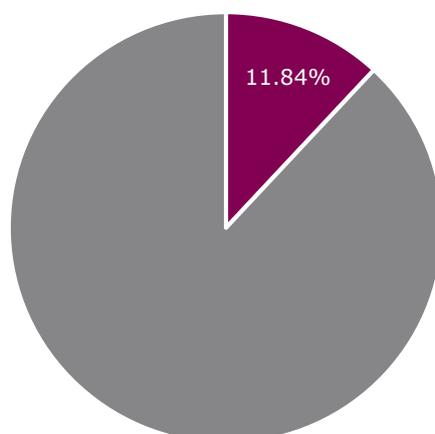
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Bullying, including intimidation and verbal abuse

(Defined as the use of force, threat, or coercion to abuse, intimidate, or aggressively dominate others.)

11.84% of the respondents who said they had experienced discrimination or inappropriate behaviour in the workplace and provided details reported **experiencing bullying, including intimidation and verbal abuse**. This included experiencing 'bullying and harassment in a major UK orchestra that led to losing work', being 'verbally bullied whilst working in a music college' and being 'shouted at and physically intimidated'.

% of those reporting discrimination who identified it as bullying, including intimidation and verbal abuse



Of these respondents **66.67%** identified as female and **33.33%** identified as male. **55.56%** were **employed** at the time of the incident and **44.44%** were **self-employed**.

50% identified a location. 44.44% (of those identifying a location) stated that their experience took place within a school setting; other locations included at conservatoires, universities, studios and orchestras.

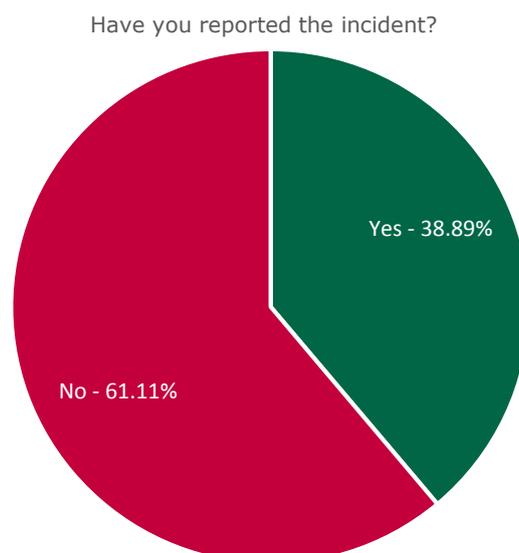
Did they report their experiences?

100% of these respondents who had experiencing bullying, including intimidation and verbal abuse answered whether they had reported their experience or not.

38.89% of these respondents **did** report their experience. **57.14%** of these respondents identified as female and **42.86%** identified as male. **71.43%** of the respondents were employed and **28.57%** of the respondents were self-employed.

61.11% of the respondents **did not** report their experience. **72.73%** of these respondents identified as female, and **27.27%** identified as male. **54.55%** of the respondents were employed and **45.45%** of the respondents were self-employed.

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77.78% of these respondents gave a reason for not reporting their experiences. Some gave more than one reason. Reasons identified were (percentage of those giving a reason):

- Fear of losing work = **42.86%**
- Considered behaviour part of the culture = **14.29%**
- Not considered serious = **14.29%**
- Fear of not being believed = **14.29%**
- Fear (general) = **14.29%**

Other types of discrimination

4.60% of the respondents who said they had experienced discrimination or inappropriate behaviour in the workplace and provided details reported discrimination on the **basis of their age**. This includes 'no longer fitted the mould of young/attractive', 'plenty of [work lost] to younger less well qualified and experienced women' and being 'treated differently for being young.'

3.54% of the respondents who experienced discrimination and provided details reported discrimination on the basis of marriage and civil partnership & maternity and pregnancy. The breakdown: **2.83%** due to maternity/paternity and pregnancy, and **0.71%** due to marriage and civil partnership. This includes being 'told I could no longer work since I had to look after my baby', 'bookings dried up when I announced my engagement', and 'lost my place in an ensemble after I had a baby.'

3.54% of respondents who experienced discrimination and provided details experienced discrimination on the basis of their **disability**. This includes 'other musicians believing that I have somehow lost the ability to perform as a musician because of disability' and 'reasonable adjustments not being made to the working environment which has led to being unable to work at various schools'.

2.83% of the respondents who experienced discrimination and provided details experienced discrimination based on their **sexual orientation**. This includes experiencing 'homophobic attacks'.

2.12% of respondents who experienced discrimination and provided details experienced discrimination on the basis of their **race and/or heritage**. This includes experiencing 'inappropriate racial "jokes"' and 'discrimination and being made fun of due to my accent'.

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Part 2: Solutions

81.57% of the survey respondents who responded to the survey (answering both yes or no) provided an answer to what the music sector can do to address this problem. A majority selected more than one answer.

Code of Conduct endorsed by the sector

85.10% of these respondents called for a Code of Conduct endorsed by the sector.

Of these respondents, **49.15%** identified as self-employed and **21.47%** as employed, with **29.38%** not identifying their employment status.

75.71% identified as female, **17.51%** identified as male, **1.14%** identified as transgender and **5.64%** did not disclose their gender.

Improved processes and procedures

69.23% called for improved processes and procedures. This includes giving 'students somewhere to be able to take complaints where they will be listened to and supported, 'better safeguarding in conservatoires', and 'anonymising complaints.'

Of these respondents, **51.39%** identified as self-employed, **20.83%** are employed and **27.78%** did not disclose their employment status.

76.39% identified as female, **17.36%** identified as male, **1.12%** identified as transgender and **5.13%** did not disclose an answer.

Training

61.54% called for training on the subject of discrimination and inappropriate behaviour. This includes 'starting at conservatoire and university level', and other education settings, such as school. 'Encouraging honest conversations about things people do not understand or unsure of' and 'printing handouts to send to schools' was also suggested.

50.00% of these respondents are self-employed, **17.19%** are employed and **32.81%** did not disclose an answer.

77.34% identified as female, **15.63%** identified as male, **1.12%** identified as transgender and **5.91%** did not disclose their gender.



Part 3: Conclusion

The results of this survey have revealed a pattern of discriminatory behaviour in a broad range of workplaces.

What is particularly troubling is the extent of sexual harassment within the music sector: almost **65%** of respondents who had experienced discrimination reported that they had been subject to **sexual harassment**. **72%** of these respondents who answered regarding their employment status were **self-employed**.

77% of these respondents did not report their experiences, with **fear of losing work** far outweighing any other reason for not doing so. This fear was not limited to just sexual harassment but a common theme across **all types of discriminations** as the survey results highlight.

The solution needs to address the realities of the music sector and how it works. Therefore, the ISM is calling for **a change in the culture** across the whole of the music sector, starting in educational settings, from schools up to and including music colleges. There needs to be absolute clarity as to what acceptable behaviour is and what is not.

There also needs to be absolute clarity in relation to the structures in place that **support musicians in their work**, including processes whereby musicians can report their concerns without fear of retribution or judgement.

To ensure that all musicians understand what their rights and duties are there needs to be comprehensive training and education. And we believe that all the above needs to be underpinned by a **sector wide code** which is recognised by all who work in the music sector.

Lastly, we are of the view that the **equality legislation** may need to be revised so that all freelancers are protected. At present only freelancers who qualify as workers are protected, leaving a huge number of freelance musicians without the basic right not to be subject to discrimination.

We do not underestimate the gravity of the problem which the ISM survey has uncovered and the extent of the work which needs to be done. We do however believe that by working together, the music sector can tackle these grave issues and make the workplace a place where musicians can work without experiencing discrimination of any kind.

There is undoubtedly an unprecedented opportunity to shift the culture across not just the music sector, but beyond.

It must be seized with ambition by everyone.

Deborah Annetts, Chief Executive, ISM

Francesca Treadaway, Communications Manager, ISM

Henry Vann, Head of External Affairs, ISM

December 2017