

**BLACK
LIVES IN
MUSIC**

**BEING BLACK
IN THE UK
MUSIC INDUSTRY**

JUST THE DATA

MUSIC CREATORS - PART 1

SEPTEMBER 2021

BLACK LIVES IN MUSIC

Black Lives in Music are at the vanguard of the effort to combat racism, uniting organisations and musicians to create a truly inclusive and diverse music industry. We use data and insights to campaign for equity and we support the empowerment of Black musicians and professionals to realise their aspirations. Black Lives in Music wishes to work with organisations, ensembles and companies throughout the UK music industry. To open dialogues and build relationships in the true spirit of working together. We want to collaborate with all agents of the UK music industry to achieve equality for people of colour so they can express themselves in all genres and in all areas of our music ecosystem.

You can find out more about Black Lives in Music at blim.org.uk



Founded in 2007 OPINIUM is an award-winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people think, feel and do. Creative and inquisitive, the Opinium team is passionate about empowering clients to make the decisions that matter. Opinium works with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. It uses the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

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In 2020 we stood in solidarity with the music industry and the community of black professionals, initially we participated in #BlackoutTuesday. Since then our teams have been building initiatives, strategies and finding leading partners to help break down the barriers of structural racism which are not only pervasive within the music industry but throughout society. At Believe we feel passionately that things need to change and this change is being sought by our people at every level. We have been extremely happy to have found and work with the team at BLiM here in the UK. We thank them for creating this first of a kind report. The report makes for uncomfortable reading but we are fully supportive of it and its findings.

"Thanks to Black Lives in Music, the data in this report proves that the individual stories we hear from professional musicians cannot be explained away as rare, one-off incidents but are illustrative of significant, widespread problems that we must all work together to address. It is clear there is more that Help Musicians should do, collaboratively, to create lasting change within the music ecosystem and we look forward to engaging with the BLiM team to work out where we can be most impactful. It is a privilege to be a major funder of BLiM and we hope that the creation of this report will help us, and others make a difference to improving the lives and careers of black musicians."

James Ainscough
CEO, Help Musicians

The UK music sector has a lot more work to do to tackle the anti-Black racism which prevents Black music creators and music professionals from fulfilling their potential and is therefore holding the whole industry back.

The Black Lives in Music Report 2021 lays out severe inequalities and differences in experiences in a way that makes it easy to see how underrepresented, marginalised and under-supported Black people in music are, and how urgently we must all address these issues.

As CEO at PRS Foundation, I am more determined than ever to address the issues shown in the report, and through POWER UP we are proud to work closely with Charisse, Roger and the Black Lives in Music team, aligning approaches to achieve the meaningful change many survey respondents and those in the wider music community demand."

Joe Frankland
CEO, PRS Foundation

Black Women Matter: We still need to identify, acknowledge, and tackle the problem of intersectional racism in the music industry that hits black women the worst. This report clearly highlights this, and it is so important to have research done that focuses specifically on the challenges black creators and industry professionals face, because we know that much of the industry has and continues to profit off of black people and appropriates black culture; and yet they are the most disadvantaged community in the industry today. BLiM's report should serve as a catalyst for industry-wide change. As a woman of South Asian descent, it's important I recognize my various privileges but also solidarities with black communities, that lead naturally to developing an allyship with them, especially black women creators in the industry. There is a lot of work to be done, and I commend BLiM for their groundbreaking research study and will do whatever I can to support their mission.

Faryal Khan-Thompson
VP of International, Tunecore

FOREWORD

The road to success in any industry involves talent, commitment, hard work and luck. The road to success in the music industry is at least as tough but minus the most obvious pathways. In many aspects, it's an industry that lacks an obvious roadmap to success. As an artist you can start from the bottom and work your way to the top or very quickly do the opposite! The ongoing issues for Black music professionals can make the journey more of an odyssey, with violent twists and turns of fortune along the way – I know this, it's been my life.

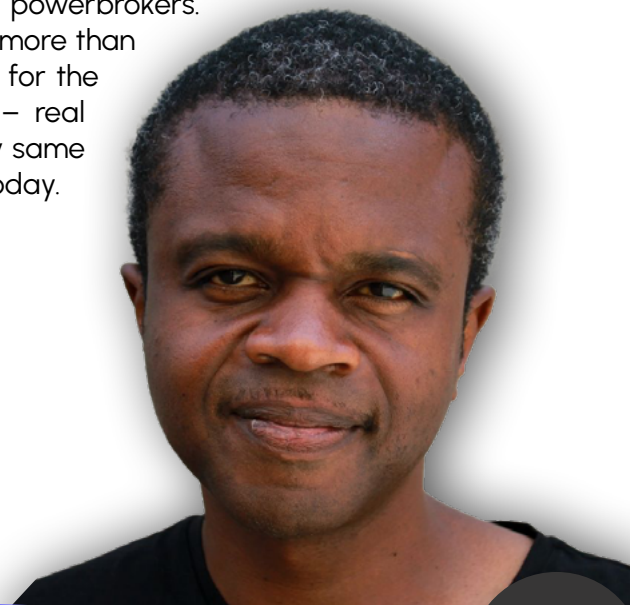
Earlier this year, Black Lives in Music commissioned a survey on the personal experience of Black music creators and industry professionals. The survey engaged with nearly 2,000 respondents. The subsequent report now published has produced key information and an insight into the experience of the Black professionals in today's music industry. It clearly shows that prejudice continues to be an issue – both implicit and structural.

The resulting effect on the wellbeing of those concerned can be no surprise. It's testimony to the determination of Black music artists and their love for creativity that their talents continue to shine through. Despite the knockdowns, Black music creators and professionals in the UK stand up again and again. Despite the lack of support from the industry, those Black professionals who are able to shine a light do so in the interests of a better tomorrow for generations to come.

There can be no doubt about the extraordinary level of Black talent in the UK music industry. The legacy of many Black artists still infuses and inspires the work of many of the finest music creators in today's wider music community. Where there is doubt is in the acknowledgement of this contribution, not to mention the integrity of an industry that owes so much to music of Black origin and the contribution of Black music creators and industry professionals.

Our report serves to highlight the plight of those who should have every right to belong to this industry. It's time for the music sector to take a good look at itself. It must now acknowledge that it needs to support the whole community, not just the few who are born in the image of the powerbrokers. These industry leaders are responsible for so much more than the success of a product; they are also responsible for the success, prosperity and wellbeing of real people – real people whose talents have helped to put these very same individuals into the positions of power they occupy today.

Roger Wilson
BLiM, Director of Operations



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Here in the UK, the campaign to fix streaming and artists' pay has reached governmental level, yet structural racism continues to be prevalent in the music industry, affecting the mental health of potentially thousands of Black music creators and industry professionals.

We have moved the needle with major corporations who are finally publishing reports on the gender pay gap, but what about the ethnicity pay gap?

We have had Black female artists speaking out in the media about discrimination and their mistreatment whilst in the music industry, but their voices appeared to be ignored by the sector which they are calling out.

Prompted by Jamila Thomas' and Brianna Agyemang's Blackout Tuesday campaign we saw there was a need to provide concrete proof of the issue of inequality in the UK music industry. In March 2021 we launched a first-of-its-kind survey on 'the lived experience of Black music creators and industry professionals' and reached 1,718 respondents.

'Being Black in the UK music industry' is the ground-breaking report based on findings from the survey. The findings reveal that racism is prevalent in work place culture and structural racism is revealed throughout the industry from grass root education through to the largest music corporations, and remains a barrier for career progression of the Black music creator and industry professional. We report from our findings the mental health implications Black people experience from their discriminatory treatment within the music industry.

This is the first part of the report and covers the following themes:

- Barriers to Progression
- Gender and Ethnic Pay
- Black Women in Music
- Mental Health

The subsequent parts will look at the granular data and themes such as intersectionality, disability, music roles, music genres and more.

Throughout this report you will also see a focus on Black Women in Music. This was not an intentional narrative but this is what the data revealed. The discrimination and disadvantage Black women face in the music industry could not be ignored. We made comparisons to their non black counterparts to ensure the disparities were clear. Unfortunately, we only received enough responses from women who identified their ethnicity as Black or White. The base size was too low from other ethnicities and if used, the data could be seen as unreliable.

I hope this report will help you understand the experience of Black music creators and industry professionals, and most importantly act. If racism disgusts you then this will be an uncomfortable read. If you want to see equality in the music industry, then reading this report is essential to change. If you choose to ignore this report, then you are ignoring your friends', colleagues' and employees' experiences to suit your own needs and that is a problem. The voices of Black music creators and industry professionals can no longer be ignored. Change must be achieved but can only happen if it is done together.

Charisse Beaumont
BLiM, Chief Executive





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INTRODUCTION

Findings from the UK Music 2020 Music Industry Workforce Diversity Survey revealed increasing ethnic diversity in the workforce since 2018. In 2020, representation of Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse people aged 16-24 in the music industry was 30.6%, up from 25.9% in 2018. In addition, the number of people from Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse communities at entry-level rose from 23.2% in 2018 to 34.6% in 2020. Representation of Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse people at senior executive levels also had a small increase from 17.9% in 2018 to 19.9%. Black and ethnically diverse people only fill just one in five senior roles within the industry. People from Black, Asian or ethnic minority backgrounds are overrepresented at intern and entry career levels (42.1%) and underrepresented at higher levels.

Given this representation of Black and other ethnically diverse backgrounds within the industry, any issues of racism must be first swiftly identified, then acknowledged, and finally tackled appropriately. This approach ensures that the industry, its workforce and consumers continue to benefit from having the best talent available, reaching their full potential without the hindrance of racism or any other form of discrimination. In this report, 'Black' is defined as people of Black African and/or Caribbean descent, including Mixed/Dual heritage.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report is fundamentally different from most others, looking at racism and racial discrimination. It is based primarily on a dataset that directly captures Black people's experiences in the music industry. In addition, while some studies report having to be cautious in their reporting because they have a small representation of minority groups, the survey for this research achieved 70% representation from Black, Mixed and Asian ethnicities.

The research sought to capture intelligence and data on the experiences of music creators and music industry professionals across all genres and from grassroots through technical and to signed artists. The quantitative and qualitative survey responses cover equality, diversity and inclusion insights and intelligence across a wide range of topics and themes, including earnings, racism and discrimination and the mental health and well-being of Black Music Creators and Black Music Industry Professionals in the UK. The survey analysis used in this report highlighting practice across the music industry and, based on these, propose a set of recommendations to combat racism and discrimination in the music industry.

The online survey gathered quantitative and qualitative information from music creators, representatives, students, practitioners and stakeholders, and provided feedback on their experiences across the sector. The analysis and reporting acknowledge that many forms of discrimination such as racism, colourism, sexism, ageism or ableism may be present and active in combination at the same time for individuals. Therefore, the approach to this report considers intersectionality to understand and communicate the multifaceted nature and impact of discrimination and disadvantage on individual well-being.





METHODOLOGY

The research survey was designed to feature both quantitative and qualitative components. The questionnaire collected statistical information on demographic profiles of those completing the questionnaire, including gender, age, ethnicity, disability and location. The qualitative provision enabled research participants to highlight and elaborate on their experiences within the music industry as music creators or as music professionals. In particular, where they experienced or witnessed discrimination on the grounds of race and other characteristics.

photo © jazz refreshed

A review of selected diversity and inclusion research was undertaken and reported to give context to this report to supplement the survey data. By extension, highlight the essential findings and conclusions from existing studies and highlight any effective practice. The rationale behind this approach was that this report's conclusions are cross-referenced where it will help to illuminate the results or to show where change has or has not taken place over time. The review forms a separate section in this report and is also referenced at appropriate points.

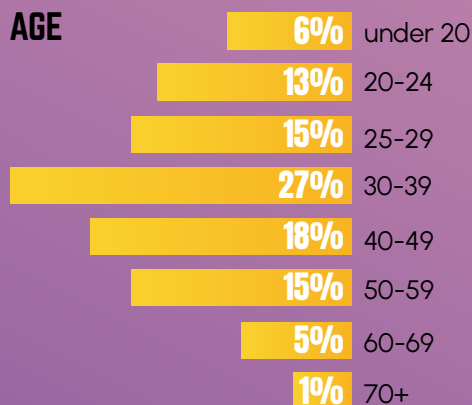
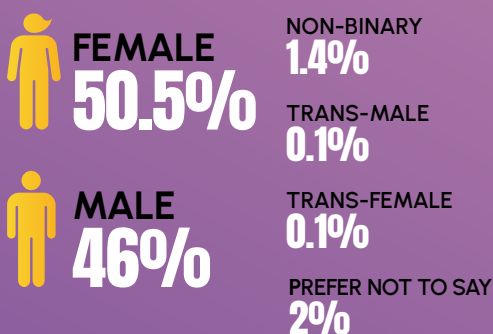
It is important to note that the Covid-19 pandemic significantly affected music and other industries in the UK and internationally over the survey period. It must also be acknowledged that this survey was undertaken at a time of great uncertainty due to unprecedented conditions of a global pandemic that led to changes at places of work, ways of working and restrictions on performing and attending music events. Therefore, the responses were provided within a context of increasing restrictions on individuals' lives in several areas, including their freedom of movement, work and work opportunities.

PROFILE OF RESEARCH CONTRIBUTORS

The survey drew responses from 1,718 participants. It captured both quantitative and qualitative responses from various music creators and music professionals across the UK. The diverse representation of the survey participants highlighted the intersectional nature of the issues presented in the findings and presented significant implications for sector organisations and individuals within and outside of the music industry.

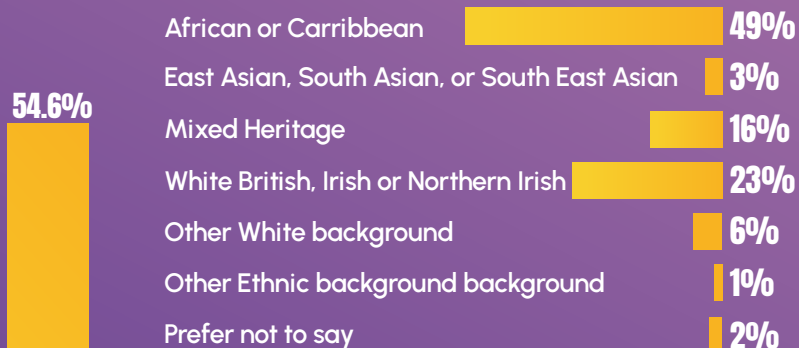
Our diverse profile of research participants represented approximately half (51%) who identify as female and 46% who identify as male. The remaining three% identified as Non-binary, Trans-female, Trans-male, Other and those who preferred not to provide a gender identity.

1,718 PARTICIPANTS

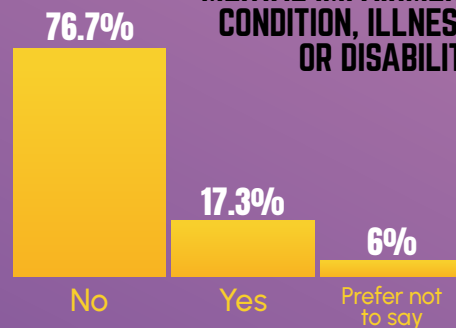


60% of the survey participants identified as music creators. The remaining 40% are music professionals.

ETHNICITY

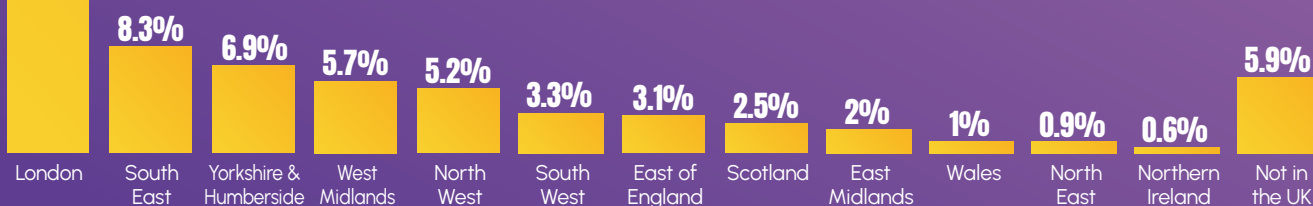


LONG-STANDING PHYSICAL OR MENTAL IMPAIRMENT, CONDITION, ILLNESS, OR DISABILITY

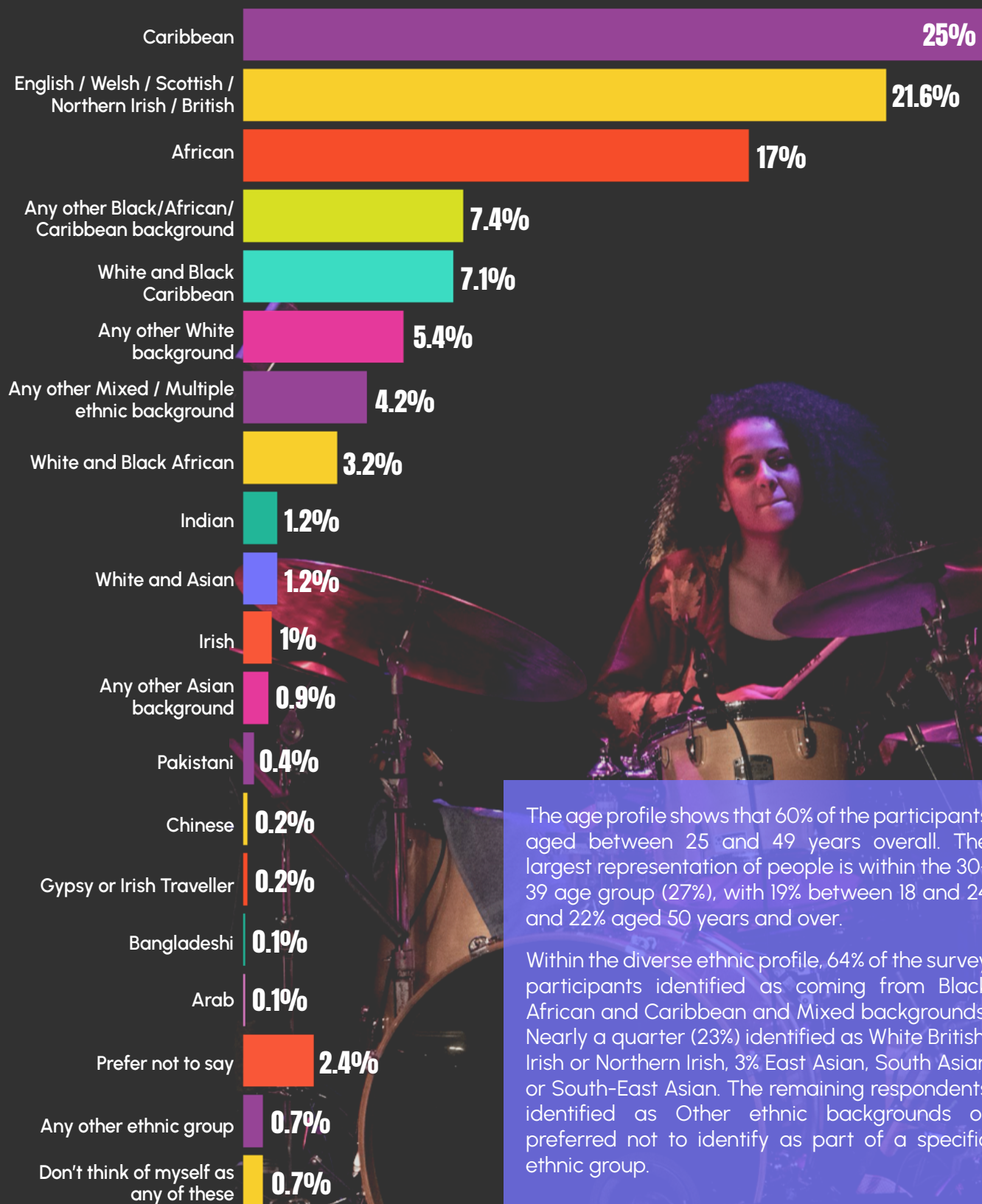


WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY LIVE?

Regionally, of the people who identified where they lived when participating in the survey, the majority (55%) lived in London. The others were located across all of the other English regions, with others located in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. 6% indicated that they lived outside of the UK. It is particularly noteworthy that musicians in the survey report the perception that relocating to London from other parts of the UK is likely to increase their chances of success in the music industry.



THE ETHNIC PROFILE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



The age profile shows that 60% of the participants aged between 25 and 49 years overall. The largest representation of people is within the 30-39 age group (27%), with 19% between 18 and 24 and 22% aged 50 years and over.

Within the diverse ethnic profile, 64% of the survey participants identified as coming from Black African and Caribbean and Mixed backgrounds. Nearly a quarter (23%) identified as White British, Irish or Northern Irish, 3% East Asian, South Asian or South-East Asian. The remaining respondents identified as Other ethnic backgrounds or preferred not to identify as part of a specific ethnic group.

photo © jazz refreshed

BLACK MUSIC PROFESSIONALS - THE DATA



KEY FINDINGS

- **86%** of all Black music creators agree that there are **barriers to progression**. This number **rises to 89% for Black women** and **91% for Black creators who are disabled**.
- Three in five (**63%**) Black music creators have **experienced direct/indirect racism** in the music industry, and more (**71%**) have experienced **racial microaggressions**.
- **35%** of all Black music creators have felt the need to **change their appearance** because of their **race/ethnicity**, rising to **43% of Black women**.
- **White** music creators **earned more** than Black creators for their work within the industry pre-covid (**£1,454 vs £1,155 per month**).
- **Black women** made **£1,026** per month compared to **white women** who earned **£1,282** pre-covid - a **difference of almost 25%**.
- More than three in five (**67%**) **Black music creators** surveyed have **earned less** than usual from the music industry due to Covid-19.
- **65% of Black music creators** who identified as disabled have experienced discrimination due to their race, 35% of the same respondents experienced gender discrimination and just 7% of Black music creators who identified as disabled were subject to discrimination due to their disability.
- Almost three quarters (**74%**) are **dissatisfied** with how the music industry supports **Black music creators**, compared to just **8%** who are **satisfied**.
- **White** music creators are **32% more likely** to have a music-related qualification than their **Black colleagues**.
- **21% of Black** music creators **earn 100% of their income** from music compared to **38% of white** music creators.
- A deep dive into the data showed just **19% of Black female** creators earn 100% of their income from music compared to **40% of female white** music creators. This figure drops to **17%** if you are a Black and disabled music creator.
- **Earning enough to make a living from the music industry** and **financial stability** are considered to be the **top signs of success** within the music industry amongst Black creators.
- **31%** of all Black music creators believe their mental wellbeing has **declined** since starting their music career, rising to **42% of Black women**.

EXPERIENCING RACISM IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

The analysis of the experiences of Black music creators surveyed reveals that nearly three quarters (72%) reported experiencing discrimination in the music industry in industry culture and behaviours. Discrimination on grounds of race was most common (58%), followed by nearly a quarter reporting bias based on their gender (24%). The results showed that discrimination based on their gender was significantly higher for Black women (44%) than for Black men (4%).

Further analysis into the type of discrimination experienced revealed that six in ten (63%) of the music creators said they experienced direct or indirect racism in the music industry, with a higher proportion (67%) indicating that they were witnesses to discrimination on the grounds of race. Similar patterns are reported in relation to micro-aggressions, with 71% of those surveyed reporting that they experienced this first hand and slightly more (73%) saying that they witnessed it.



It is noticeable that the racism and/or micro-aggressions they reported witnessing and/or experienced directly included explicit racist language being used toward them, being treated differently because of their race or ethnicity.

Lack of Black representation in the music industry was reported as a factor in this research. While

some incidents were reported as isolated occurrences, other survey participants reported consistently being mistreated because of their race or ethnicity.

These are demonstrated in the following statements:

"Having to repeatedly ask other artists to stop using the N-word."

"Jokes about skin colour, Africa, persistent questioning about where I really come from."

"In orchestra settings, I have experienced people suddenly addressing me in ways that mimic Black vernacular. Such as saying, "Yo! What's up?" even though they do not typically speak in such a way."

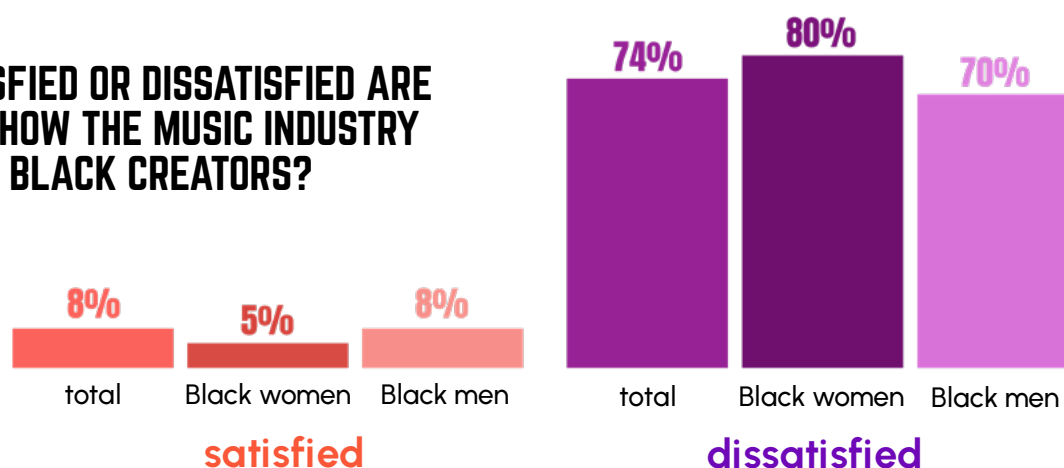
This key theme emerged from this research whereby many music creators discuss being denied access to opportunities and the ability to progress compared to their non-Black counterparts.

MUSIC INDUSTRY CULTURE AND BEHAVIOURS



With the evidence of direct and indirect racism and microaggression experienced or witnessed by Black music creators as reported in the survey, when asked how satisfied they were with how the music industry supports Black music creators, 70% of those responding to this question were somewhat or very dissatisfied, whilst 8% said they were very or somewhat satisfied.

HOW SATISFIED OR DISSATISFIED ARE YOU WITH HOW THE MUSIC INDUSTRY SUPPORTS BLACK CREATORS?



Here is a suggestion by a white male music creator for action that the music industry needs to take to eradicate racism / racial disparity:

"Frank conversation and real action. As a white man, 'positive discrimination' could negatively affect my career, but this is the only real action that I can think of to change the music industry into one I'm proud of being a part of. 99% of the people I play with are white British (and majority male), but many of the musicians I look up to and aspire to play with are BAME. I'm currently trying to facilitate a systemic change within one of the bands I play with so that our 'pool' of players reflect the makeup of our society. We have struggled to make this change for a while now but we are at a point where the band will most likely cease to exist if it is not meaningfully addressed".

Consistent with the response on the level of discrimination communicated in the survey, nearly three quarters (74%) are dissatisfied with the way the music industry supports Black music creators; this is higher for Black women (80%) compared with Black men (70%).

"They would much rather support a white artist with "urban" appeal than a Black artist."

"The industry does not invest enough in Black artists or support them with contracts and promotions; they have often said Black artists don't sell. 'The fact of the matter is the industry does not support us, and that needs to change!"

Further reflecting the negative experiences and incidences of racial discrimination, more than half (56%) of the Black music creators in the survey felt their contributions to the music industry were not adequately recognised. More than half of these felt that was because they were Black, with 20% saying specifically that it was because of their race or ethnicity. The comments provided indicate a perceived lack of visibility as well as being overlooked despite their achievements as musicians. These factors were highlighted as a key reason for disappointment with a lack of acknowledgement and support within the UK music industry. The evidence the Black female creators provide to demonstrate their experience of discrimination in the industry make it explicit, clear and unambiguous:

"Because Black women (like myself) who are more than competent in the roles that they undertake are often overlooked and not taken seriously. Our skin colour isn't as palatable within the office, within the board meeting room, on the stage/online platforms and or in society, and unfortunately, it's been an ongoing issue for decades!"

"Because in England in classical music there is little support for artists of colour. I have made a career in classical music as an opera singer but mostly abroad."



Despite the evidence of racism and other forms of discrimination, particularly toward Black women, a small minority (8%) of the Black music creators surveyed said they are satisfied with how the music industry supports them. Furthermore, they were optimistic that they would benefit from opportunities created as a direct response to the recent climate of openness and debate around systematic racism in the wake of Black Lives Matter protests—also, the subsequent recognition of and commitments to tackle systemic racism in the UK.

“Encouraged by the more honest debate being sparked by the BLM protests and Blackout Tuesday. It has opened up a direct dialogue about inequalities and systematic racism faced by Black people.”

“I am satisfied as more opportunities are being created for us. I also love that people are now taking the time to research composers from the past from African or Caribbean descent who have been overlooked.”

To achieve lasting progress, companies must go beyond the systematic approach to inclusion and diversity to ensure representation of diverse talent and to strengthen leadership and accountability for inclusion and diversity. They must also be ready to tackle sensitive topics around cultural norms and highlight and apply consequences for individual behaviour, including that in management and leadership, sustaining these efforts over time.



BARRIERS TO PROGRESSION

For Black creators in the BLiM survey who feel that they cannot achieve some of the key signs of success, over half (52%) believe it is specifically because of barriers related to their race or ethnicity. In comparison to 19% who feel that their race or ethnicity is not a factor. Not being afforded the same opportunities to be successful as white counterparts was cited as a significant barrier to success for Black music creators while others encountered obstacles in terms of a lack of appropriate opportunities to develop and lack of support in the industry.

"In the UK there is not as yet the acceptance that Black musicians in Classical music have a valid place in what classical music ensembles put out."

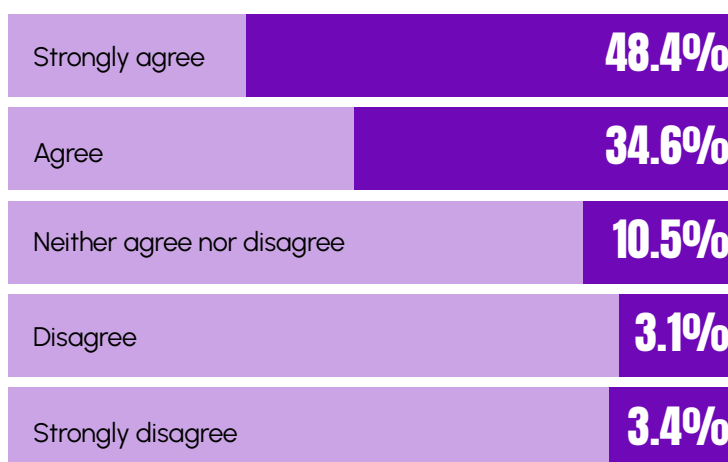
The barriers to progression reported in the survey are wide-ranging, as indicated in the examples below.

"I think that Black musicians are relegated and pigeon-holed to certain areas of the industry."

Black music is always viewed as having to come up with something that's so-called original, and that has never been done before... however, that's not the case for white music and musicians. It's still ok to sound like the Beatles or Oasis. But if you're Black and play a guitar, you're told you sound like Hendrix - it's been done before!

There was a mixture of responses in terms of support, with 21% saying they had help at every step of their career to enable them to get to the next stage and nearly three times that (56%) indicating that they had not received such support. Similarly, just over two thirds (68%) of Black creators said they had to find their own way of becoming successful because they did not receive the support they would like and believe that they deserve within the industry.

HOW FAR DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING? PROMOTION AND RECOGNITION HAPPEN LESS FREQUENTLY FOR BLACK PEOPLE IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY COMPARED TO PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT BLACK.

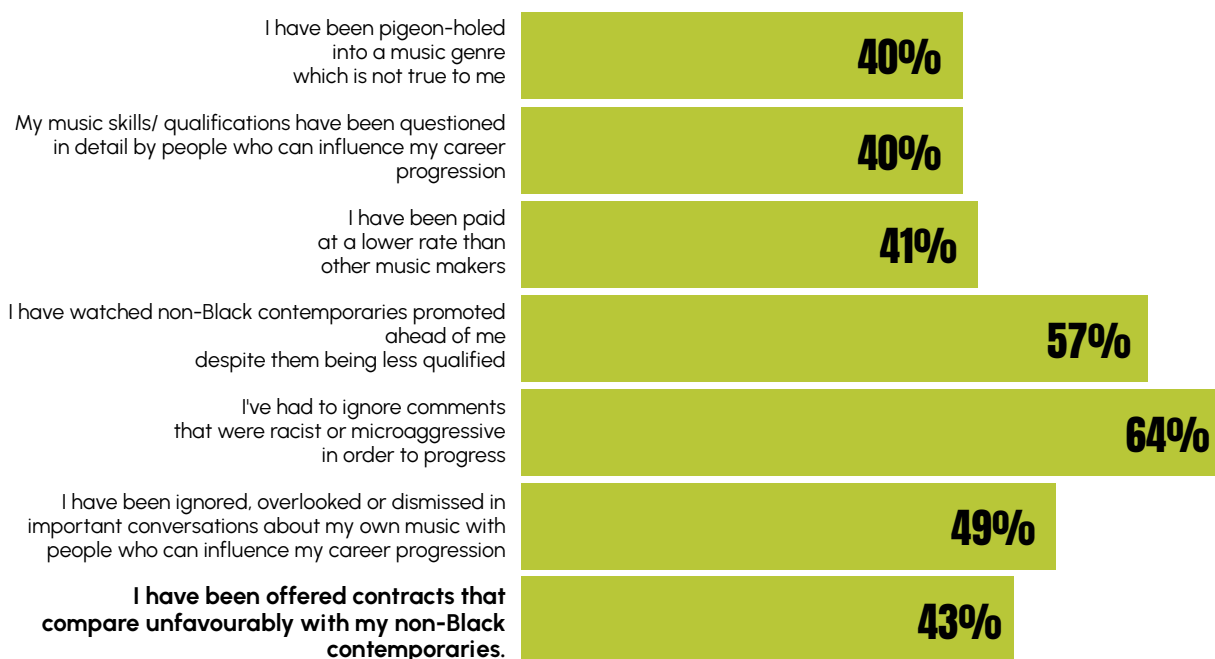


"There is little to no support - Firstly, the level of representation in labels etc., is awful. As a dark-skinned Black woman, I have found it hard to gain opportunities that have been very easy for my white counterparts to get. This is something that people at the top who are white will never be able to relate to. There should be mentors of colour to help those coming up as well as more representation. There is so much to be done."

Throughout this research, the lack of support is a consistently recurring theme in the research findings.

Removing barriers to career progress has been highlighted in the survey results as needing urgent attention to bring about more significant opportunities and success for Black music creators. The survey results show that 86% of Black music creators feel there are barriers to their progression in the music industry. Furthermore, 82% believe that Black people in their industry are less likely to be promoted than their white counterparts. These rates increase in the responses given by Black women (89%) who believe that there are barriers to progression for Black people in the industry and that promotion and recognition happen less frequently for Black people within the industry (89%).

PROPORTIONS OF BLACK MUSIC CREATORS WHO AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS



There have been incidences of Black music creators being offered unfavourable contracts. With 40% of participants having their musical talent questioned by people in a position to influence their career progression were cited as reasons for this view. In addition, three in five (57%) have watched their non-Black contemporaries be promoted ahead of them despite being less qualified. In addition, 41% were paid at a lower rate than other music makers working on the same event, rising to 44% of Black women. Finally, in considering the barriers to their progression, 40% of the Black music creators felt they were pigeon-holed into a music genre where they disagreed with the genre classification.

"When composer and musician Lavender Rodriguez began her career, navigating her way through the classical music industry as a queer Black woman quickly began to feel "isolating" in a world that shows a subconscious lenience towards "white male composers".

"There's a certain air about people who play classical music and obviously there's a lot of privilege that comes with that," Rodriguez explains. "There's a lot of trying to play catch up because in order to get some opportunities, you just have to have the money rather than pure talent."

Lavender Rodriguez, composer & musician



After being diagnosed with ADHD during the pandemic, Rodriguez had to come to terms with the reality that the classical world, full of deadlines and strict rules around conduct, is not equipped for people who are neurodivergent. "There's a way that you sit in concert, you've got to be quiet, everything's very strict and if you don't do x, y, z you're not included," she explains, "The fact that there's all these traditions that we're still trying to grasp on to makes it so hard to make the music accessible to other people because it's been built on this traditionalist mindset of white male privileged people".

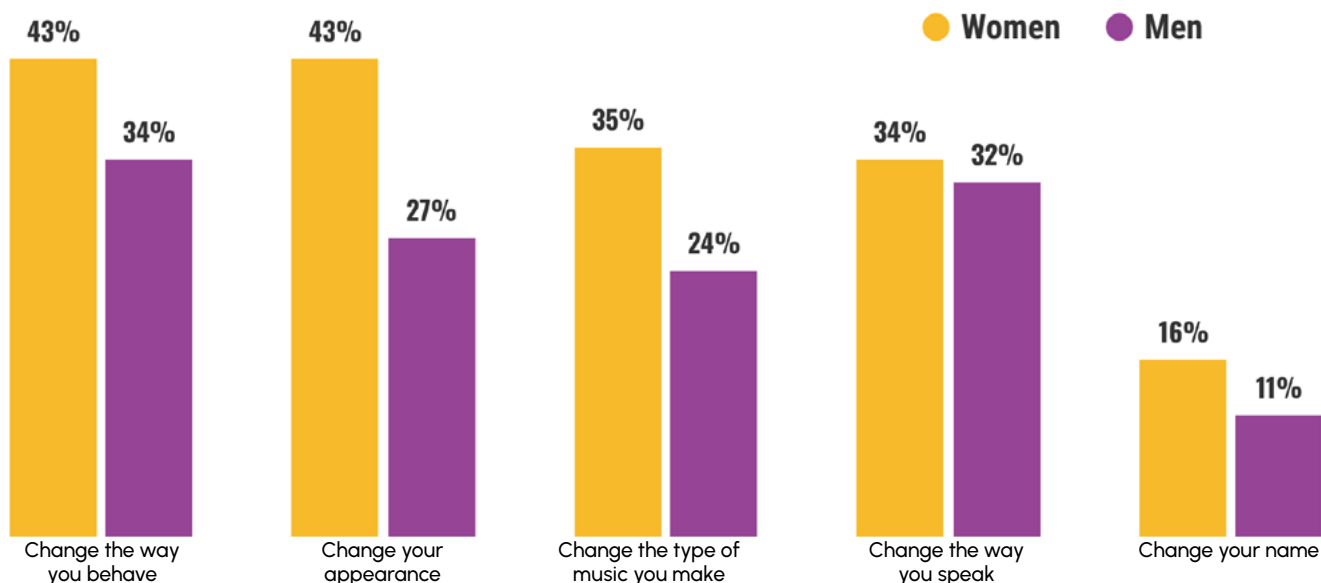
The pressures of working in the industry can impact your mental health. It is a cycle which she sees as embedded in the industry. "We need to make [the industry] more stable, so that people have the time to focus on their health. Otherwise, everyone's health will just keep deteriorating," she explains, also acknowledging that mental health pressures can become more apparent if you're neurodivergent or have a disability, "trying to fit into this fast-paced ableist world, it just needs to be slower."

BLACK WOMEN IN MUSIC



BLiM survey shows similar results suggest that in their efforts to combat discrimination and fit in with their external expectations, Black women are more likely to change their behaviour and appearance. The data shows this is evident in the 43% who reveal that they change the way they behave or the way they speak because of concern about how these characteristics would be received by those who influence their work and career opportunities. Overall, 70% said they felt they had felt the need to change something about themselves in order to get ahead and be accepted by the industry. The chart below demonstrates some of these differences between Black women and men creators in the music industry.

PROPORTIONS OF BLACK MUSIC CREATORS WHO HAVE FELT THE NEED TO CHANGE TO BE APPRECIATED



The survey analysis suggests that Black women and Black men within the UK music industry are consistently treated unequally compared to their white counterparts. They highlight why the music industry must work to improve the experiences and opportunities for non-white creators and professionals and bridge the gender gap in a sector heavily dominated by men and particularly white men in general.

The quotes below from the survey sums this statement up:

"There is also a lack of inclusion for women of colour within the industry and barriers surrounding "marketability". I have observed that it is a very male-dominated field and one that can potentially cause a female artist to feel disempowered and marginalised."

"Black women can't make rock music, sexual comments about the size of my lips, etc., racial comments about my 'crazy, unruly' afro, etc. I don't give these comments my energy anymore but feel it's important that people are aware."


"We can never seem to get through the door, and we are often overlooked at every turn - and if you have kids, it's even worse. The music industry makes it harder for Black women overall, but especially for dark-skinned women who are just as beautiful, radiant, talented, intelligent, driven and credible as the next person! But when we bring these facts to the table, we are often labelled too outspoken, forthright, feisty, aggressive, angry, bitter, argumentative, sensitive, ungrateful and or that we have an inferiority-complex when the truth is we are natural-born leaders who shouldn't have to dumb ourselves down to appease others."

There is a need for support targeted at Black women as suggested here, giving the example of how the situation for Black men is different from that for Black women in the industry.

"I have always wondered if having more female promoters or at the top in the music industry would help combat some barriers for Black female artists."

"I believe issues are worse as a Black woman as we have to face different additional harmful stereotypes and discrimination, and the double barriers we face are rarely addressed in women in music."

Being a valued member of the music community was the most important sign of success to Black female creators in the music industry at 76% next was earning enough to make a living from the music industry (75%).



"I was approached by TV production companies, I think about four times within the span of two years, asking if I wanted to participate in a few talent shows, and I declined those offers because I didn't feel that they were right for my journey."

"That's probably the only space that dark-skinned black women are allowed to exist in the British music landscape—that and being the backup singers for other Artists. We won't get the opportunities to be signed to major labels and independent labels, but we may get the opportunities to be background entertainment. It means they don't have to financially invest in us beyond these TV show appearances."

From her time in the industry, going forward Blu is focused on understanding "how I can still make music and feel safe, honour Black African culture and make it sustainable". She believes creating a community of Black women in the industry who can support and understand one another as an essential tool for change and healing.

"So long as we're on the same page and we understand what systems we're operating in we can use our natural creativity and resourcefulness to build something alternative for ourselves," she insists, "which doesn't bring harm. I think a lot of my focus in this stage of my career is on continuing to nurture and build that community, and use my art and imagination to redefine what success looks like for me as a dark skinned Black British woman operating in this oppressive landscape."

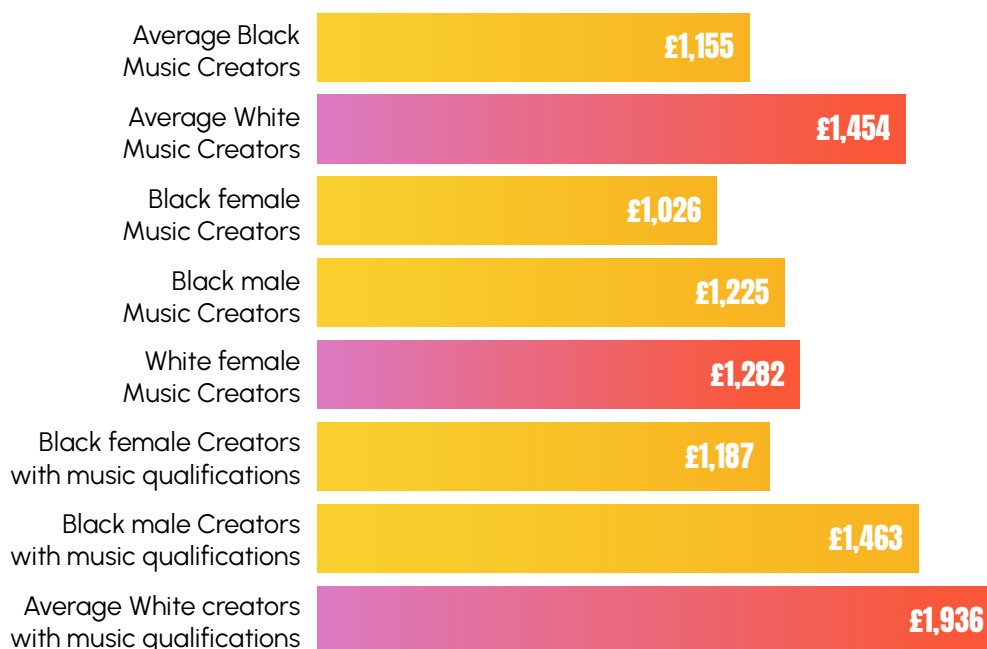
Estée Blu, singer-songwriter



GENDER AND ETHNIC PAY DISPARITY

Black music creators in the survey reported that they started earning an income from the music industry on average six years prior to 2021. They said further that before Covid-19, they were earning on average £1,155 per month from relevant work in the music industry. This figure compares with the £1,454 on average per month for White music creators. Almost half of the Black music creators surveyed said they have to supplement their income with work outside the music industry.

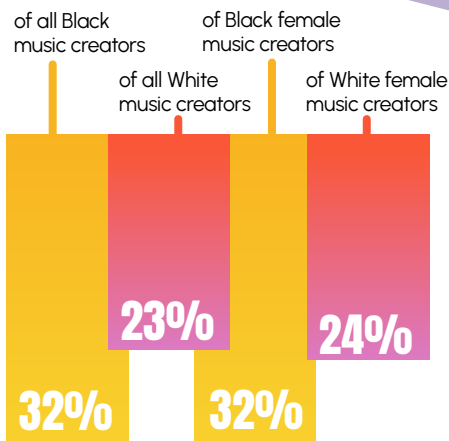
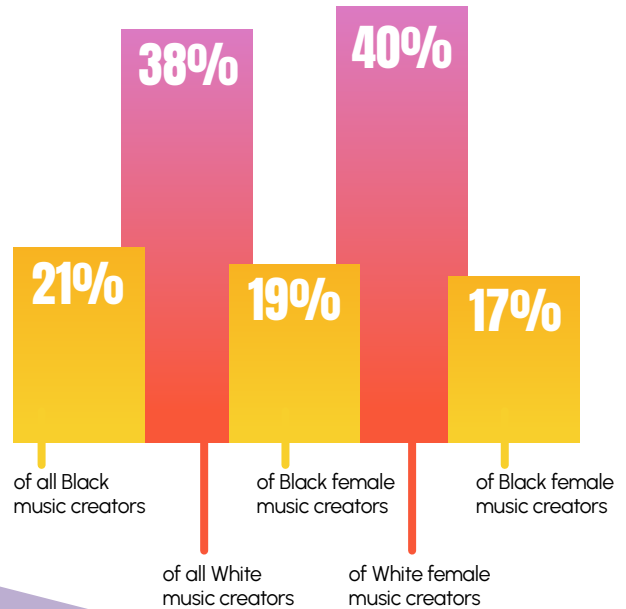
In the gender analysis, Black female creators report earning £1,026 on average. This is less than the £1,282 earned by White female creators and £1,225 per month earnings in the industry reported by Black men. This gender difference is consistent when looking at Black women and Black men with qualifications. Black creators with music qualifications earned less at £1,463 than white creators who were paid an average of £1,936. Black women with qualifications are paid significantly lower at £1,187.



The relationship between the length of time spent working in the music industry, and the level of earnings does not seem to be linked in the analysis. However, the results show clearly that Black music creators have felt the need to do additional work outside of the industry to supplement their income to provide an adequate standard of living. For nearly half (46%) of Black music creators, less than half of their revenue comes from work within the music industry.

Just 21% of Black music creators earn 100% of their income from music compared to 38% of white music creators. A deeper dive into the data showed that just 19% of Black female creators earn 100% of their income from music compared to 40% of White female music creators. This falls to 17% if you are a Black and disabled music creator. 32% of Black women surveyed reported less than 25% of their income comes from music, this compares to 24% of White female creators who earned less than 25% of their income from music.

MUSIC CREATORS WHO EARN 100% OF THEIR INCOME FROM WORK IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY



MUSIC INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS WHO EARN LESS THAN 25% OF THEIR INCOME FROM WORK IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

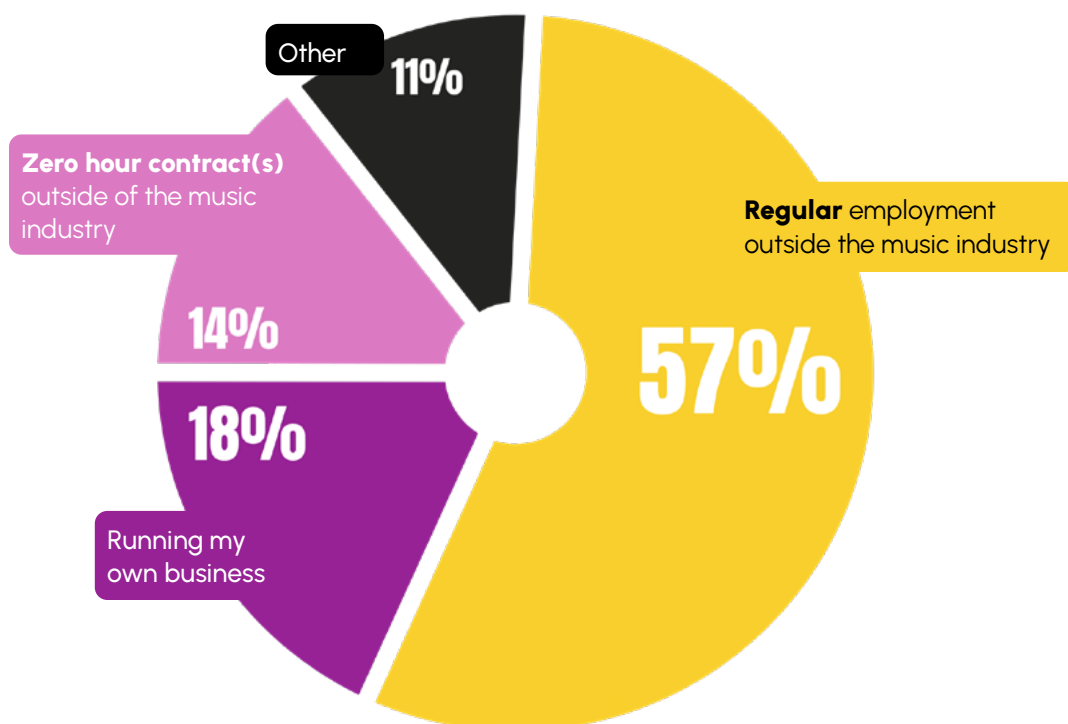
43% of Black music creators agree that they have been offered contracts that compare unfavourably with their non-Black contemporaries.

The most common sources of supplementary income include regular employment outside the music industry (57%), running their own business (18%) and zero-hours contracts outside the music industry (14%) with some respondents finding other ways to supplement employment (11%).

"Although my main income is currently a teacher, I'm an instrumentalist/session musician/composer/producer and, like so many have to diversify to survive."

WHERE DOES THE REST OF YOUR INCOME COME FROM?

Base: Black creators who earn less than 50% of their income from the music industry



There have been countless examples of Black musicians who have publicly called out their labels for trapping them in unfair, exploitative contracts. For Kienda Hoji, a law consultant and lecturer at University of Westminster, the scourge of unfair contracts being handed out to Black people in the music industry is widespread and the result of both insidious and subconscious practices.

The three key areas that are considered when breaking down these contracts are "how long the agreements are, longevity, secondly investment, and then thirdly, ownership of music ownership of masters of the recorded material," Hoji explains. When an artist is about to be signed, the label will make an assessment of an artist's potential profit and then make an offer in the form of an advance or royalties. Where the problem lies is that a pop artist will often be offered a bigger advance than an r&b artist because Black music genres are, according to Hoji, "very under assessed".

"Various organisations in the music industry don't necessarily possess the knowledge about what the marketability of these artists is," states Hoji, adding that to correctly assess the value of Black music we need to look beyond the boundaries of genre. "If we start to think about the wealth and the amount of potential earnings for music of black origin and black music then we start to see an incredible figure."

Kienda Hoji, law consultant and principle lecturer in media law and music business at University of Westminster

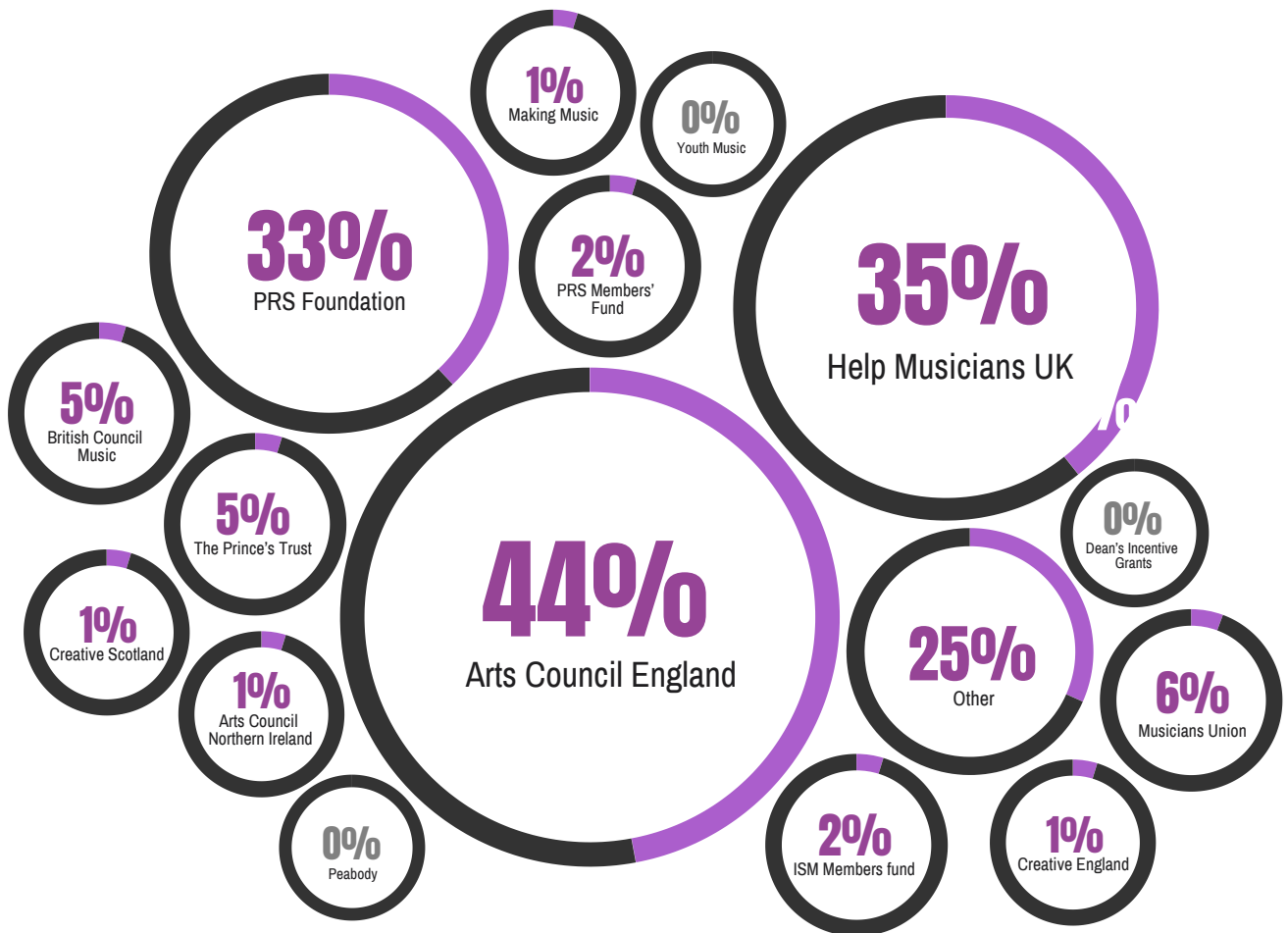


FUNDING

Successful funding application is a valuable source of finances to support music creators and professionals throughout their careers and supplement earnings. However, the Black music creators are not always aware of the sources of funding available, the conditions, the application process and how their applications would be assessed.

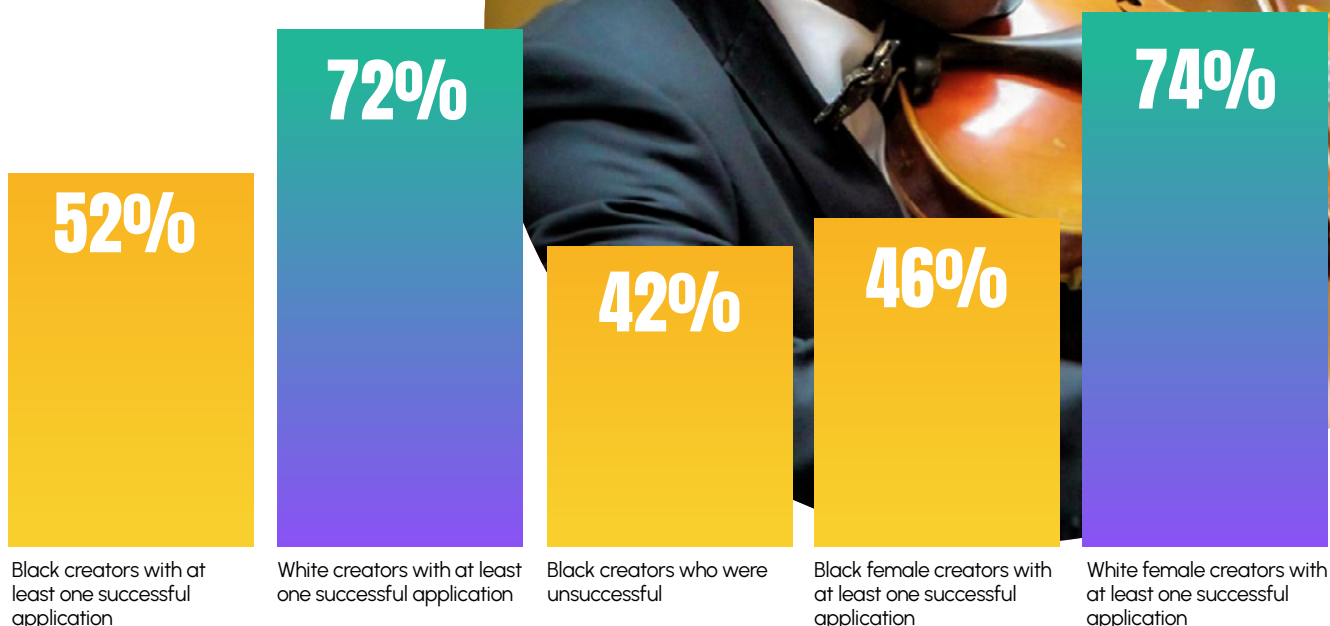


In the survey, half of the Black music creators reported that they applied for funding to support their career in the music industry. This included 34% who had applied for the financing more than once. Whilst there are numerous appropriate funders and funding streams, Arts council England (44%), Help Musicians UK (35%) and PRS Foundation (33%) were identified as the most common funding bodies Black music creators received funding from.



Of those Black music creators who applied for funding, more than half (52%) have had at least one successful application compared with 42% who were unsuccessful. White creators in the survey were more likely to have at least one successful application (72%). 46% of Black female creators had one successful application compared to 74% White female creators who were successful.

BLACK MUSIC CREATORS FUNDING APPLICATION SUCCESS RATE



It is evident in the survey results that there is potential for more and better quality funding applications if the knowledge and extra support can be made available to potential applicants. For example, the most common reasons some Black music creators gave for not applying for funding was that they did not know the funding was available (45%) and did not know where to apply (34%). Of concern is the view of 13% of the Black music creators in the survey who said they had not applied for funding because they felt that funders would not award money to people like them.

TOP 5 REASONS FOR NOT APPLYING FOR FUNDING TO SUPPORT THEIR MUSIC CAREER

45%

I didn't know funding was available to me

34%

I wouldn't know where to apply

24%

I wasn't sure how the application process worked

13%

They never give funding to someone like me

13%

I didn't need extra support

This research demonstrates a need for clear information about relevant funders, funding streams, and the application process to be made available to music creators and professionals in a timelier manner. However, even those who were successful with their funding application agreed that the application process was confusing (61%). In addition, more than half (56%) said they became aware of the funding opportunities relatively late, making it difficult for them to meet the application deadline. These may have been factors in the situation where only around a quarter (24%) felt confident their application would be successful.

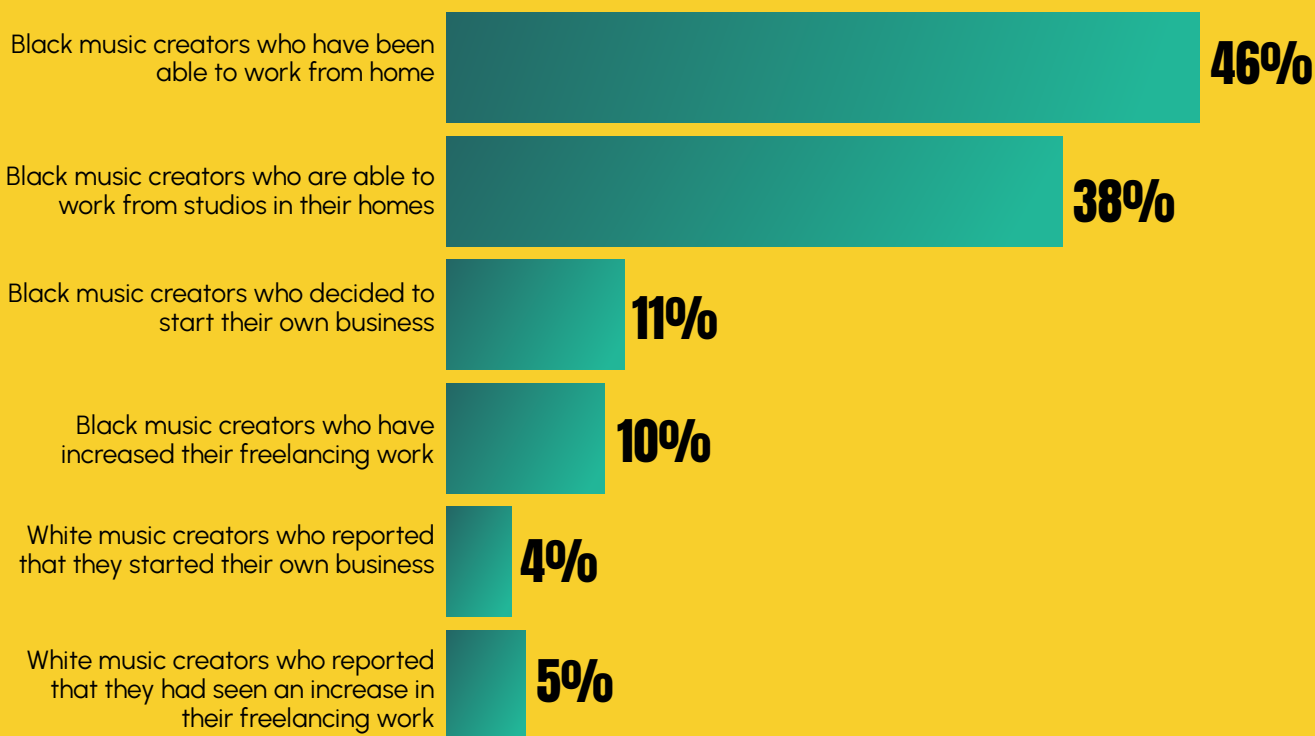
THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Covid-19 has also had impacts on the earnings of those in the music industry. Three in five (67%) Black creators have earned less than usual from the music industry, rising to 68% of White creators. Conversely, just over one in ten (12%) Black music creators say they've earned more during this time. Perhaps surprisingly, this is double that of White creators (6%).

Looking at the survey results, more than half (55%) of those surveyed have had their physical shows or performances cancelled or postponed, and more than a third (38%) have to spend money on buying equipment or instruments to use from home. This issue is likely to drain on financial resources as more than two-thirds (67%) of Black creators report earning less than usual from the music industry compared to just one in ten (12%) who made more during this time.

Moreover, over the past year, the Covid-19 pandemic changed the landscape of traditional work locations and routines. The survey results show that for Black music creators specifically, the impact has been disruptive, with more than half (55%) having had their physical performances and shows cancelled or postponed. Fortunately, nearly half (46%) of Black music creators reported that they have been able to work from home, with over a third (38%) working from studios in their homes.

CAREER CHANGES THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC





INTERSECTIONALITY AND DISCRIMINATION

The survey analysis explored intersectionality as an approach to understanding and illuminating the interconnected and interdependent characteristics of participants in the survey. The results highlighted how a person's characteristics and identities combine to create their unique experiences of discrimination. The survey results demonstrate the combination of race and gender in perpetuating the disadvantage experienced by Black women sharing their experiences in the survey. The qualitative comments also highlighted age as a factor:

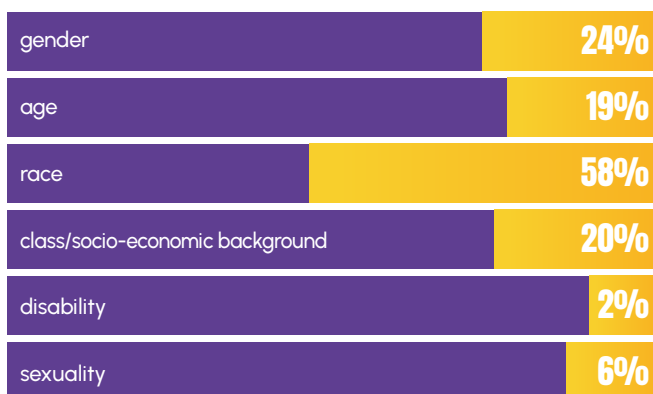
"The biggest barriers I have witnessed and encountered in this industry have been physical, sexual and emotional abuse. These were at times linked to the victim's ethnicity, gender or disability."

"There should be a focus on Black women in the industry, who face race/racism, sexism and very often ageism, all at once."

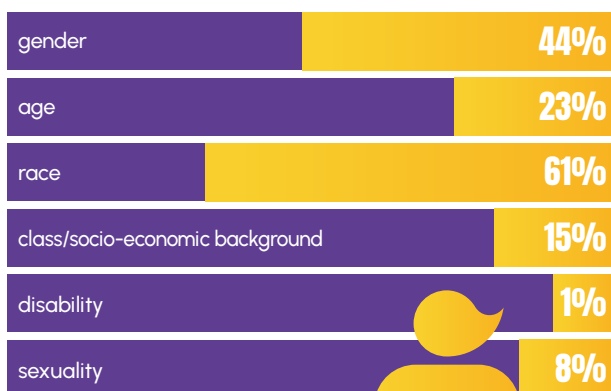
Intersectionality in the survey results is evident in the many qualitative accounts provided by Black women in particular. The results suggest that whilst race and ethnicity are the primary grounds for discrimination in the survey, gender is a close secondary factor concerning Black women. The interconnection effects of the combination of race and gender are further by the lower pay and lower status in the industry for those women in the survey, demonstrating how these identities, perceptions and experiences combine to create unique experiences of discrimination and oppression. The situation for Black women in the survey is different and more pronounced than that for Black men.

The results highlight, for example, how race and gender, especially for Black women, intersect and overlap to amplify the negative experiences of Black women in the sector. When devising and delivering solutions, consideration should be given to the mental health and well-being consequences of such intersectionality. A focus on race or gender only would not always be appropriate due to the combination of factors that determine the experiences of many Black music creators.

HAVE YOU FACED DISCRIMINATION IN THE INDUSTRY? YES, ON THE BASIS OF MY...



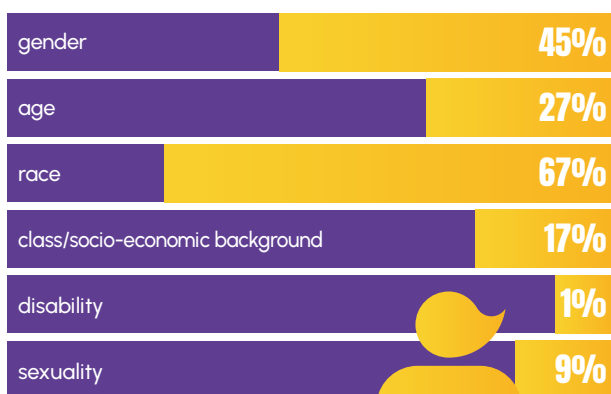
All Black music creators



Black female music creators



Black female disabled music creators



Black female music creators aged 35+



Black Disabled music creators



Looking at the above data, three in five (65%) of all Black music creators who identified as disabled have experienced discrimination due to their race. Further to this, 35% of the same respondents experienced gender discrimination. Therefore, just 7% of Black music creators who identified as disabled were subject to discrimination due to their disability.



EDUCATION

“Equal opportunities are needed across the board, and particularly in supporting diverse and inclusive early-years music education which feeds into high-level programmes ie: Junior conservatoire courses which then feed into conservatoire courses.”

The Music Mark report notes that it is widely acknowledged that music education is an area where systematic change is required to engender better diversity and inclusion. The Music Mark report cites the revelation that white people wrote 98.8% of pieces on the latest ABRSM syllabus.

The Music Blueprint, which collected data across the entire music sector in the UK (Creative Blueprint, 2011), suggested that 93% of the industry was white. Blamey et al. (2014) reported that Black and ethnic minority people are under-represented in classical music education, accounting for only 10% of the studentship in the UK. Similarly, from data on 5 UK conservatoires in 2012/2013, only 8% of students who disclosed their ethnicity were from a Black and minority ethnic background.

An ABRSM report (2014) showed that 74% of children from the upper-middle class and middle-class backgrounds had had instrumental lessons compared with only 55% of children from other social backgrounds.

The BLiM survey results, consistent with the above research, show little change, suggesting that white music creators are more likely to have formal or professional qualifications that are specific or relevant to their profession than Black music creators. Over half (53%) of Black music creators have formal or professional qualifications relevant to their work in the industry, compared with 78% of their White counterparts.

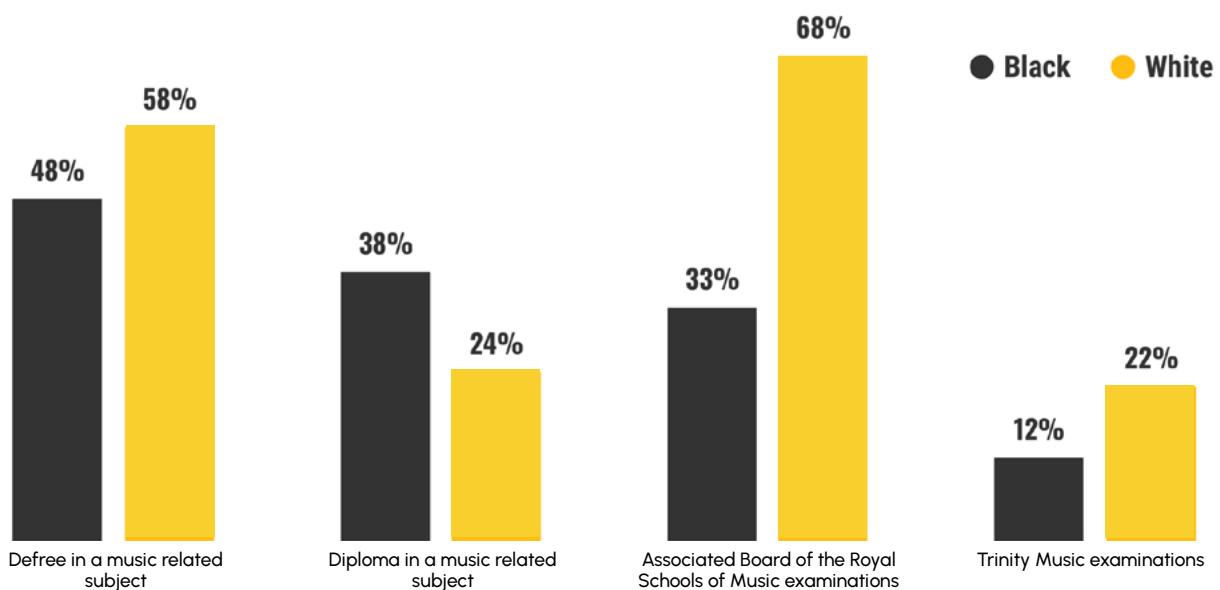
“Western Classical music is still so heavily a part of our education in music and is so inherently white, that it creates an accidental culture where we don't see enough racial diversity in our musical education through school and into University.”

“There is an individual whom I have come across at the BBC who commissions music projects who questioned whether there are any Black people in the UK who come from a classical music background even in the 21st Century.”

On examining the type of formal qualifications music creators in the survey have, whilst a high proportion (88%) of Black music creators have a music-related degree or other qualification, this is less than the 97% held by the white music creators. Similar proportions of Black men and Black women have a music-related degree or qualification (89% and 88%, respectively).

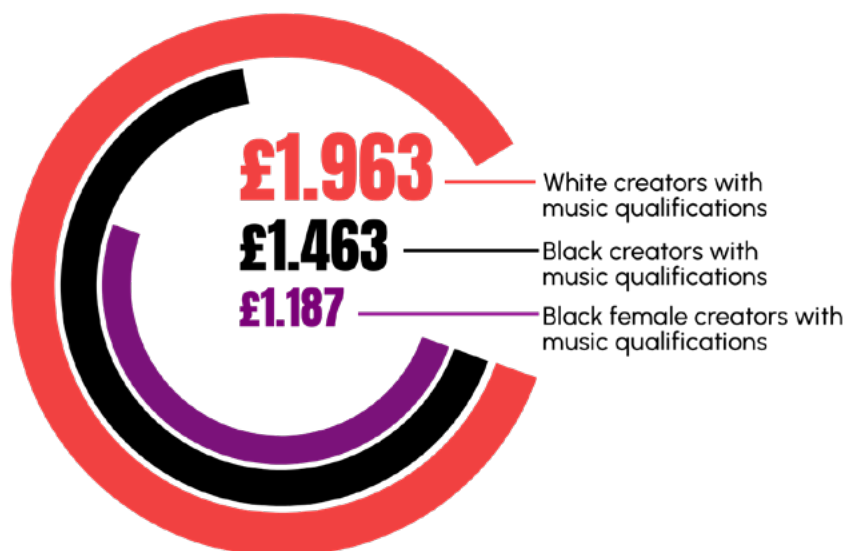
The most common music-related degree for Black music creators in the survey is a degree in a music-related subject (48%), followed by a diploma in a music-related subject (38%), and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examinations (33%). However, the analysis shows that White creators are almost two times more likely to have a qualification from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examinations and the Trinity Music examinations (68% and 22% respectively).

DIFFERENCES IN FORMAL OR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS HELD BY BLACK AND WHITE MUSIC CREATORS



Black creators with music qualifications earned less at £1,463 per month in comparison with white creators who made £1936 per month. In addition, Black women with qualifications are paid significantly lower at £1,187 per month.

MUSIC CREATORS' AVERAGE EARNINGS PER MONTH



"We need some investment financially in initiatives in classical music for Black Creatives. We need more proactive routes to creating more Black Professors who can work at top levels in classical music in the music colleges and universities. We need more input into creating a proper knowledge of the legacies which Black creatives have brought to classical musical music, through education, broadcasting, artists in residence from abroad and also archives in mainstream organisations."

"Reducing educational inequalities to lay a sustainable foundation for more diversity to emerge and succeed in the music industry. Narrowing the inequality gap comes with reducing costs to access quality music education; equalising standards and resources among music education systems; creating opportunities for socially and economically underprivileged communities; using the power of representation."

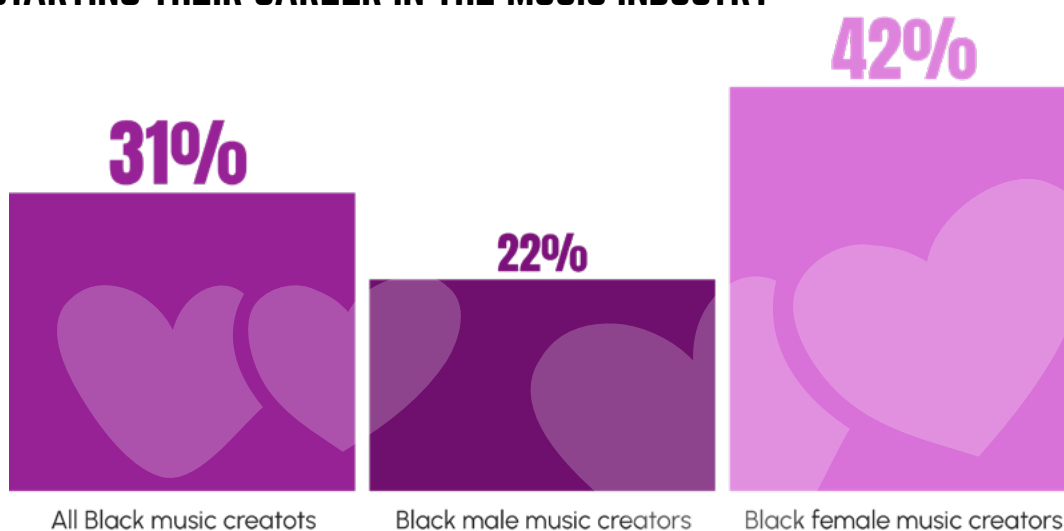


MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In the survey analysis, Black female creators are more likely than Black men to say their mental wellbeing has worsened since starting their career in the music industry. Nearly one-third (31%) of Black music creators believe their mental wellbeing has deteriorated since starting their music career. White creators also highlighted this issue, suggesting a requirement for a sector-wide programme to address mental health and well-being support.

Further, people who had reported having mental health challenges previously now report deterioration in their mental wellbeing. This is especially prominent for Black female creators, where two in five (42%) say their mental wellbeing has declined since starting their music career, almost twice as many as Black men in comparison (22%). The survey results highlight that more effort and resources need to be invested in identifying the real needs of Black women in the sector and make available appropriate mental health support in an easily accessible way.

BLACK MUSIC CREATORS WHOSE MENTAL WELLBEING HAS DECLINED SINCE STARTING THEIR CAREER IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY



"When you talk about the current state of my mental health compared to when I started, it wasn't linear for me but rather a wave. There have been ups and downs from the beginning, and you learn to adjust, readjust, change direction and move away from negative colleagues."

Looking at the mental health support reported in the survey, Black music creators who received support to improve their mental health and wellbeing are more likely to report improvement in their mental wellbeing (41%) than those who had not received such support. This point demonstrates the urgent need for adequate investment in support and mentoring informed by the specific experiences, which provides choice for individuals to meet the particular needs of Black music creators, particularly women.

This quote highlights it:

"I had bad mental health when I started, and in the 2 months then I got much better also because of one of my mentors Spider."

There is a cautionary note on those Black creators who try to self-manage the mental health challenges. The survey results suggest this is far less effective than having targeted professional support. They also highlight the critical issue of access to knowledge of the kinds of support available, access to such help, support within the workplace to manage the circumstances and affordability of the support when not provided for free.

"I am a mixed-heritage, neurodiverse woman who has chronic health conditions as well as mental health issues and have found in the past that some if not all of these issues have held me back from breaking through with my music career. Due to the lack of understanding by fellow musicians, being in male-only/male-dominated communities, not knowing where to get support, or if any even existed, I felt so deflated that I have abandoned two separate attempts to have a music career and returned to a visual arts practice instead. The fact that surveys like this are being conducted gives me some hope of perhaps being able to try one last attempt to become established, and it is important that these issues are recorded, acknowledged and worked through by all of us together."

The experience of racism and the mental health challenges Black music creators face should not be considered isolated factors. The survey identified a clear relationship between the two, with **14% of Black music creators reporting that they have had to seek counselling or therapy directly resulting from the racism they experienced or witnessed in the industry.** A similar proportion indicated that they had not yet sought counselling but would be doing so in the future.

HOW DID YOU FUND THE CHARITY OR RESOURCE THAT YOU USED TO SUPPORT YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING?

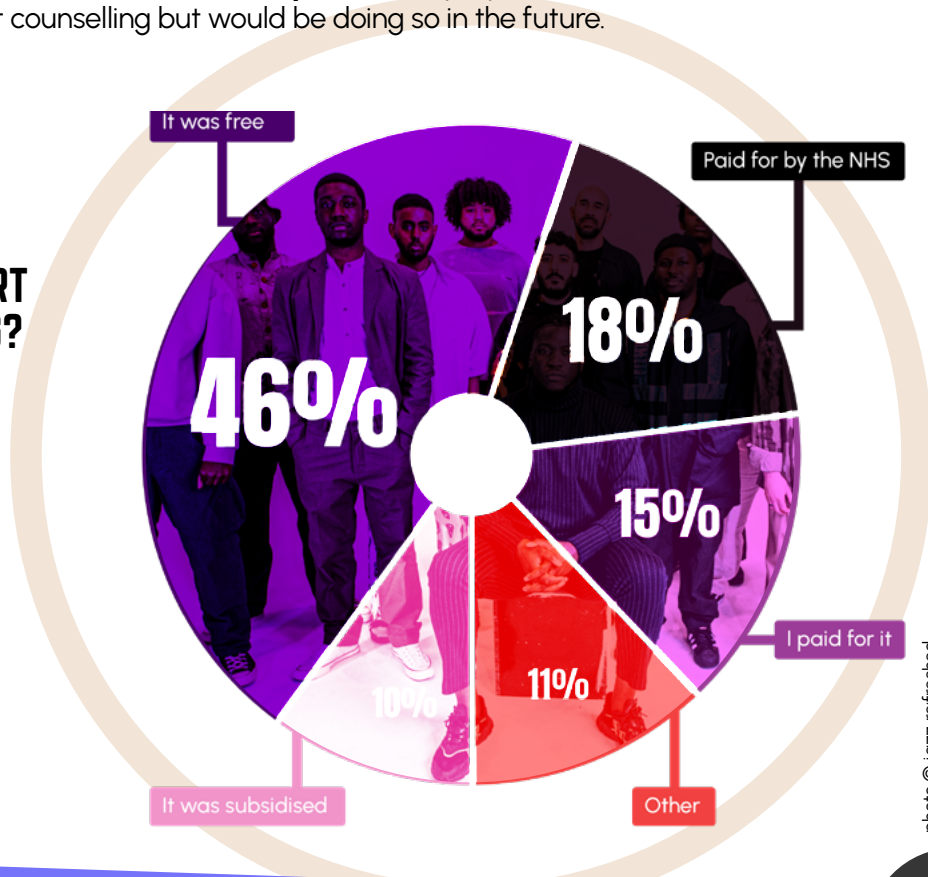


photo © jazz refreshed

On exploring where participants in the survey sought mental health support, a quarter of Black music creators indicated that they engaged with the services and resources of charitable organisations when seeking help with their mental health and wellbeing. However, only 6% stated that they approached MIND. This point is an unexpectedly small proportion considering the national profile of this charity. Therefore, it is worth investigating whether the cost of support determines whether and where the Black music creators in the survey sought help. Of those who had sought support via charities, 46% said the service they received was free, and 18% said the NHS paid for their treatment. In addition, another 10% said it had been subsidised, 15% self-funded via the charity/resource they used and finally, 11% answered other.

The survey results on this topic highlight that more effort and resources need to be invested in identifying the real needs of Black women in the sector and making appropriate mental health support available in an easily accessible way.

Music creators report a lack of representation in their work environments. A sense of 'feeling like you don't belong or fit in' was expressed by musicians and music students from all genres, but more strongly reflected within the Musical Theatre and Classical sectors. According to research, BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic) music students tend to either be forced to conform to norms that 'fit' the culture of whiteness or opt out of music altogether. The potential effect on the presence and quality of experience of BAME individuals in the Music Industry is concerning.

The music sector needs to take responsibility for their part in bringing about change. Several areas of note appear to be of particular help to the BAME community in music, supported by findings from both studies. Support and mentorship seem key. More pressing is the need to explore and provide meaningful support for the mental health challenges experienced by Black and Ethnic Minority music creators and professionals, with particular attention to the needs of women in the Industry.

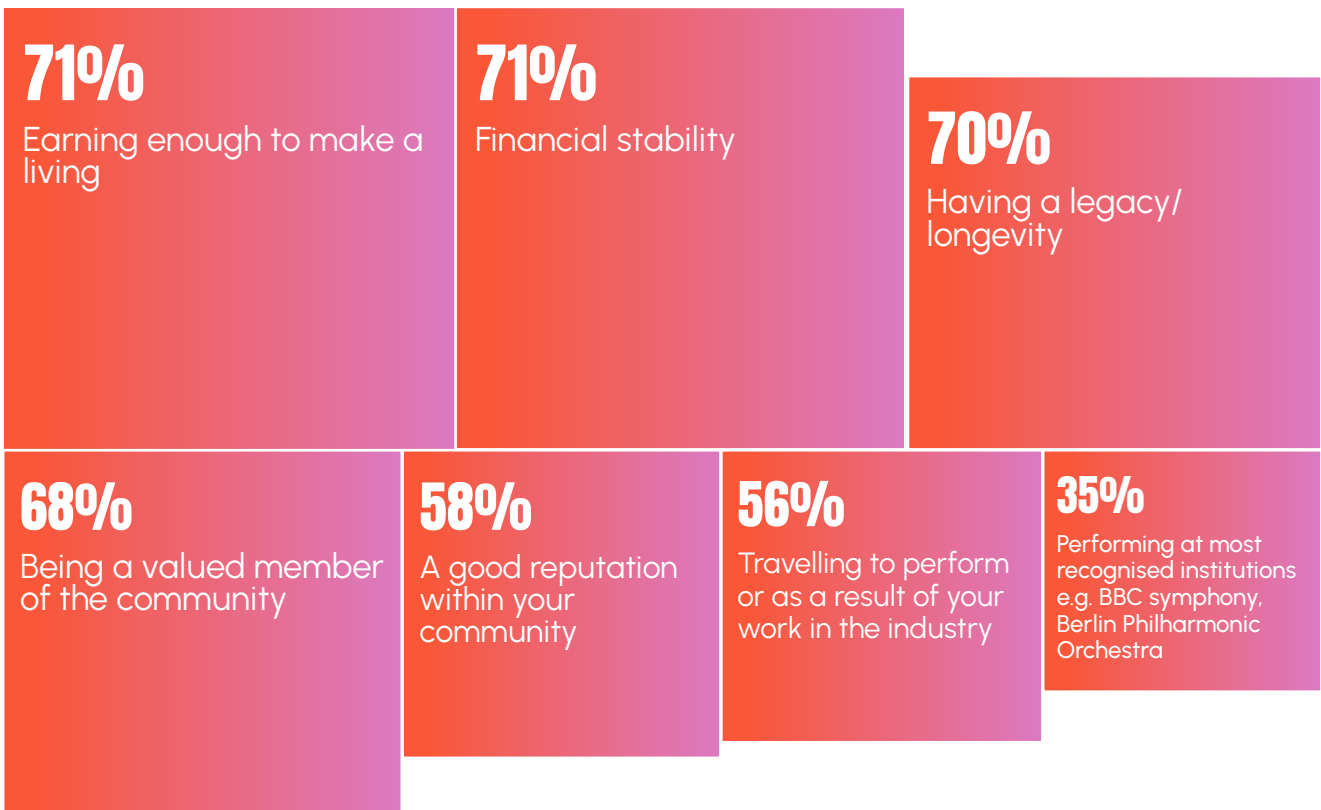
Natasha Hendry, Music Psychologist





FUTURE THINKING

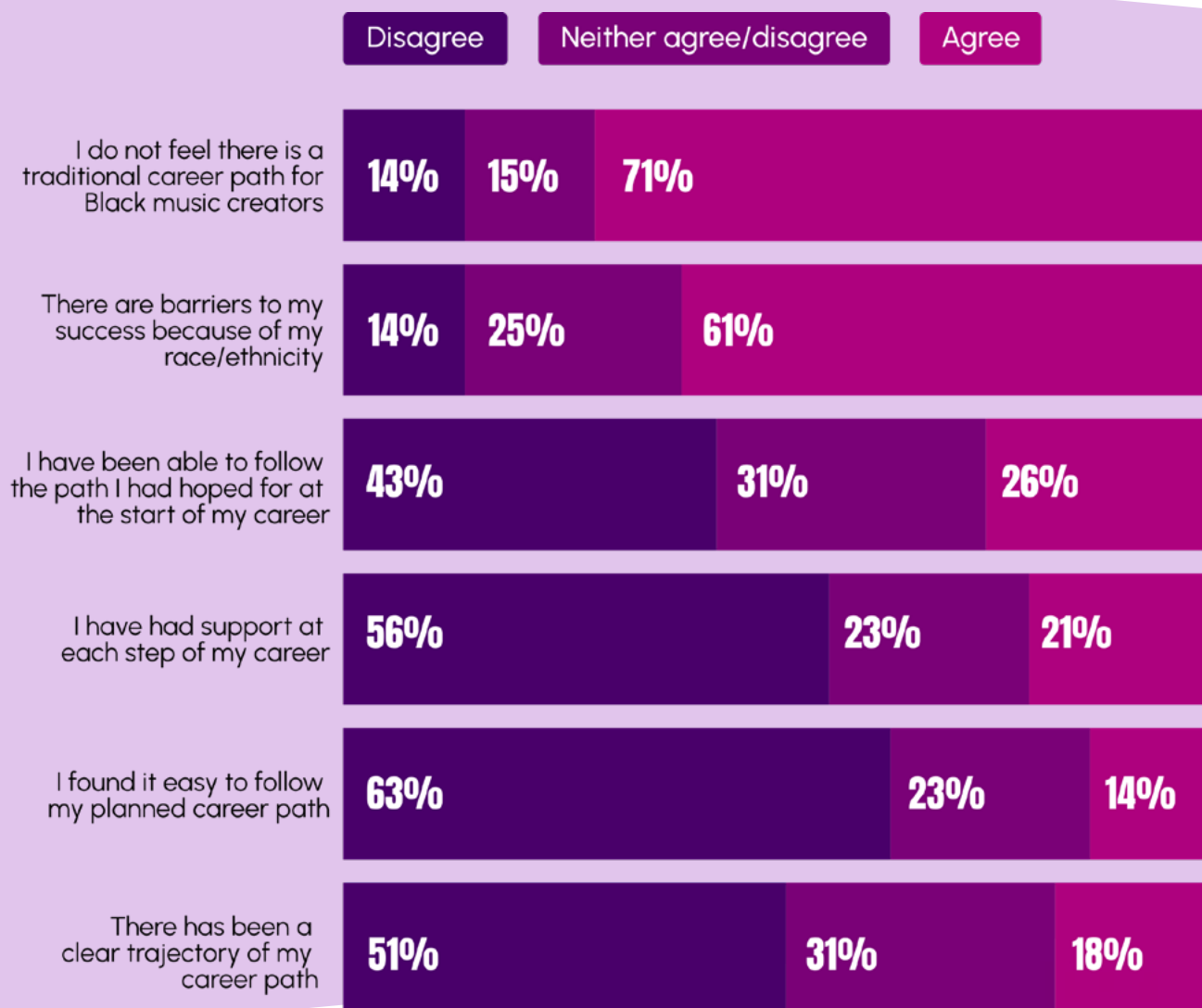
56% of Black music creators would describe their career within the industry as successful now, compared to 63% of white creators. When asked which factors are the most important signs of success, 'earning enough to make a living from the industry' and 'financial stability' were reported as most important for Black creators, with 71% on both measures. This data is different from the responses from white music creators who rated 'being a valued member of the community' (77%) and 'having a good reputation within the community' (73%) as signs of success in the industry. These findings may indicate areas where Black music creators struggle the most and highlight differences of perspective afforded to white music creators in comparison to Black music creators in terms of thriving or simply surviving.



The statistics show that earnings, reputation and legacy, community recognition and appreciation and opportunities to perform at prestigious events were among the main signs of success for Black music creators. Those surveyed were generally optimistic about achieving success on these measures, despite the barriers communicated.

However, nearly three-quarters of Black music creators in the survey (71%) did not think there was a clear career path for Black music creators, and 61% felt there were specific barriers to their success because of their race or ethnicity.

BLACK MUSIC PROFESSIONALS WHO AGREE/ DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS



REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Collaboration remains key to bringing about transformative change in the industry and addressing the inequalities highlighted through this report and others. The UK Music Diversity Taskforce's 10 point plan is an example of this collaborative approach.

The recommendations outlined reflect the issues highlighted in this report. These recommendations were specifically developed to enhance the experiences of both music creators and music professionals at all stages of their careers. In addition, they are intended to support other diversity recommendations for the sector and to be pursued collaboratively by sector employers, organisations and stakeholders.



ADDRESSING THE GENDER AND ETHNIC PAY GAP

1 The Music Industry to implement better transparency around the Gender and Ethnic pay gap by publishing an annual pay gap report – looking at gender and ethnicity – with an accompanying set of commitments to address gaps.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO PROGRESSION

2 Black Lives in Music partners and the wider music industry, including music education, to allocate budgets and implement a programme and training to increase diverse representation in middle and senior management working towards a quota of 30% diverse (race) and 50% (gender). Progress towards these goals will be reported to Black Lives in Music as part of the annual progress audit.

3 Education, diversity and inclusion/anti-racism policies and action plans to be in place in every music organisation.

4 Organisations to offer financial investment into grass root education, mentorship programmes and bursaries for Black Musicians - a list of programmes will be supplied by Black Lives in Music.

5 The wider music industry must commit to advancing equality and inclusion to address the race, gender and intersectional disadvantage and agree implementation of mechanisms to demonstrate the value-added activity supported through the stakeholder relationship. These recommendations could be implemented by working with organisations such as Black Lives in Music, The Black Music Coalition, ADD and Power Up to assist in changing their policies.

MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING AND SPECIALIST SUPPORT

6 Music organisations to conduct workshops, create safe spaces alongside signposting to organisations that work in the area of mental health support specifically for Black music creators and professionals. To work in conjunction with organisations such as Music MITC, Musica Therapy, Black Minds Matter, Music Support and Music Minds Matter.

7 The Music Industry to establish an anti-racism support service to tackle the issue of racism in the music industry. The anti-racism support service will provide a helpline available to Black creators and professionals who experience racism in the music industry. Also, providing referral and in-depth therapeutic support.

A JOINED UP APPROACH TO ERADICATING SYSTEMIC RACISM

8 The Music Industry (recording, trade bodies, education, orchestras and funders) to create an anti-racism manifesto and code of conduct across the music industry supported by the current UK Music 10-point plan. The music industry taking the lead on producing a code of conduct that individuals or organisations working in the music industries will agree to, will be a highly effective way of asserting a new vision to help eradicate racism across the music sector for the benefit of all those who live and work within it.

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