# New guidelines aim to reform UK creative industries in wake of scandals



New guidelines are set to be issued this week designed to reform the UK’s creative industries, emerging in response to a series of scandals that have raised serious concerns about workplace behaviour. Notable incidents have included allegations of inappropriate behaviour by television personalities Gregg Wallace and Gino D’Acampo, as well as bullying claims linked to the BBC's Strictly Come Dancing.

The Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority (CIISA), a newly established body, will introduce these guidelines aimed at eradicating bullying, harassment, and discrimination, while addressing the existing “power imbalances” within the sector. The authority is urging organisations to create robust reporting mechanisms and to establish ways to learn from preceding scandals, alongside promoting safe and inclusive working environments.

Jen Smith, the chief executive of CIISA, expressed her commitment to implementing these standards across various facets of the industry, including commissioning agreements, contracts, and awards criteria. "Then no one can say, ‘I didn’t know’ or ‘It wasn’t clear’," Smith remarked.

CIISA has been founded by Dame Heather Rabbatts, who saw the necessity for an independent body to hold creative industries accountable. This initiative follows Rabbatts' prior experience in founding Time’s Up UK in 2018 as part of the response to the #Me Too movement. Smith, previously the director of culture and inclusion at the British Film Institute, had also contributed to developing standards aimed at combating harassment in the aftermath of the Harvey Weinstein scandal.

Smith noted that current sentiments within the creative sectors reveal a lack of safety for many workers. "People don’t currently feel as safe as they should in the creative industries," she stated. She highlighted an identified gap within the industry's infrastructure, noting that many workers are without HR departments. "What people really needed was a safe, confidential place to raise concerns, seek advice, get help," she added, pointing to the lack of independent oversight.

Recent research conducted by Bectu, the union representing those in the creative industries, indicated that 84 per cent of respondents believed an independent body was necessary to investigate, document, and prevent harassment. Smith elaborated that the freelance nature of much of the workforce has exacerbated these issues; many are hesitant to report misconduct for fear of jeopardising their employment opportunities.

A survey encapsulated in the Film and TV Charity’s Looking Glass report for 2024 revealed that 41 per cent of participants had experienced bullying, harassment, or discrimination in the previous year, with over half not reporting their experiences. Of those who did voice concerns, 21 per cent reported that the situation worsened.

While CIISA lacks enforcement authority, it relies on the commitment of the creative industries to uphold these new standards. However, breaches can be reported to CIISA, which will offer legal advice, arbitration, mediation, and support for individuals pursuing criminal justice or employment tribunal cases as needed.

On the topic of governmental support for CIISA, Smith revealed that she had engaged with Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, who advised the TV industry of the urgency to improve standards of behaviour following the recent allegations against D’Acampo. Nandy asserted to ITV News, "If the industry can’t get its own house in order, we are prepared to step in… The time for action is long overdue."

Responding to the allegations, D’Acampo has "categorically" denied claims of inappropriate sexual behaviour, stating through legal representatives, "This is the first time, six years later, he has been informed of these alleged incidents, and he does not accept them." Meanwhile, Wallace's legal team has labelled the suggestions of sexually harassing conduct as entirely false.

Initially, CIISA will concentrate on the screen, stage, and music sectors, with plans to expand oversight to other fields such as gaming, publishing, and fashion in due course. Smith emphasised the necessity for a cross-sector approach to identify patterns of misbehaviour, suggesting that if allegations are reported to isolated individuals or companies, critical information may not be shared adequately across the industry.

"A single entity where people can report confidentially and safely" is essential in order to gather insights into concerning behaviour and address issues accordingly, Smith stated. She further remarked on the importance of learning from the failures of the past, observing that "we’re seeing repeated stories in the press. When things go wrong, how do we prevent that from happening again?"

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/creative-industries-growth-moment> - This URL provides information on the UK government's initiatives to support the creative industries, which aligns with the broader context of reforms and investments in the sector.
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-> - This URL could provide news coverage on scandals within the UK creative industries, such as allegations against television personalities, which are referenced in the article.
3. <https://www.bectu.org.uk/> - Bectu is a union representing workers in the creative industries, and their research is mentioned in the article as supporting the need for an independent body to address harassment.
4. <https://www.thefilmcharity.org.uk/looking-glass-report> - The Film and TV Charity's Looking Glass report is referenced in the article for its findings on bullying, harassment, and discrimination in the creative industries.
5. <https://www.itv.com/news/2024-02-14/gino-dacampo-denies-allegations-of-inappropriate-behaviour> - This URL could provide specific details on Gino D'Acampo's response to allegations, which are mentioned in the article.
6. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/january/creative-industries-debate/> - This URL relates to a scheduled debate on creative industries in the House of Commons, reflecting ongoing discussions and governmental interest in the sector.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2025/feb/22/uk-creative-industries-set-behaviour-standards-after-strictly-and-masterchef-rows> - Please view link - unable to able to access data