# UK government calls for banning NDAs to tackle music industry misogyny



A recent report from the UK government has brought renewed attention to the pervasive issue of misogyny within the music industry, highlighting the urgent need for reform surrounding non-disclosure agreements (NDAs). It concludes that these agreements are frequently misused to silence victims of harassment and abuse, suggesting an outright ban to combat the entrenched culture of misogyny. This report, titled *Misogyny in Music: On Repeat*, is the third such investigation from the women and equalities committee. It follows earlier findings that depicted a music industry still largely characterised as a “boys’ club,” illustrating a troubling lack of progress on gender equality issues in the sector.

The committee’s chair, Labour MP Sarah Owen, pointed out that despite claims of support from the industry, little meaningful change has occurred since the previous reports. Not only do women face systemic discrimination within the industry—over one-third reported experiencing sexual harassment at work—but there are also critical disparities in pay and career opportunities. According to the UK Musicians' Census, research indicates that women are eight times more likely to face discrimination than their male counterparts, which compounds their vulnerability in an already hostile environment.

Among those who provided testimony to the committee were pop-soul artist Celeste and classical soprano Lucy Cox, both of whom articulated the complex barriers women encounter. Cox shared a jarring anecdote from her early career, revealing that she was told her chances of working in classical music depended on the unfortunate circumstances of others. Such testimony reinforces the report's findings that parental responsibilities can also further hinder women's employment prospects, leading to a precarious balance between career and family obligations.

Additional insights emerged from the data collected by the Musicians' Union, revealing a stark reality: while a significant number of women experience harassment and discrimination—51% reporting gender discrimination and 47% racism—fewer than 12% of those affected actually report these incidents. This silence often stems from a fear of retaliation, a concern echoed by Naomi Pohl, the union's Secretary, who noted the inadequacy of existing initiatives that claim to support women in the industry. The committee stressed an urgent need for government intervention to address these entrenched issues effectively.

The report further advocates the establishment of a Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority (CIISA), a non-statutory body designed to enhance behavioural standards across the creative sectors. CIISA chair Jen Smith stated that such an authority would not only support victims but also assist smaller employers in managing complaints and establishing fair practices in workplaces where bullying and harassment remain rampant. The need for such interventions has become more pressing, especially for freelancers who lack the protections afforded to permanent employees under current legislation.

Drawing on the perspectives from experts in the field, Dr Charisse Beaumont, CEO of Black Lives in Music, voiced her frustration at the sluggish pace of change. She insisted that further reports are unnecessary and that tangible actions based on prior recommendations are critical. Deborah Annetts, chief executive of the Independent Society of Musicians, echoed this sentiment, underscoring the shame of the previous government’s rejection of earlier recommendations and urging the current government not to make the same mistake.

In conclusion, the latest report advocates for immediate legislative changes, including amendments to the Equality Act to offer better protections for women and gender non-conforming individuals, particularly in light of their heightened vulnerability within the sector. As the music industry grapples with these longstanding issues, the call for reform underscores not only a need for accountability but also a commitment to creating a safe and equitable environment for all.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/ndas-should-be-banned-to-curb-music-industry-culture-of-misogyny-says-new-government-report), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/ndas-should-be-banned-to-curb-music-industry-culture-of-misogyny-says-new-government-report)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/ndas-should-be-banned-to-curb-music-industry-culture-of-misogyny-says-new-government-report), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-68667119), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/jan/30/britains-world-class-music-industry-has-a-dark-secret-its-still-a-boys-club)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/ndas-should-be-banned-to-curb-music-industry-culture-of-misogyny-says-new-government-report), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-68667119), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/29/sexual-harassment-and-racism-endemic-in-uk-music-sector), [[6]](https://committees.parliament.uk/work/6736/misogyny-in-music/news/198229/committee-invites-evidence-on-the-use-of-ndas-in-the-music-industry/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/ndas-should-be-banned-to-curb-music-industry-culture-of-misogyny-says-new-government-report), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/ndas-should-be-banned-to-curb-music-industry-culture-of-misogyny-says-new-government-report), [[6]](https://committees.parliament.uk/work/6736/misogyny-in-music/news/198229/committee-invites-evidence-on-the-use-of-ndas-in-the-music-industry/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/ndas-should-be-banned-to-curb-music-industry-culture-of-misogyny-says-new-government-report), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/jan/30/britains-world-class-music-industry-has-a-dark-secret-its-still-a-boys-club), [[7]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-legal-measures-to-protect-workers-from-misuse-of-non-disclosure-agreements)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/ndas-should-be-banned-to-curb-music-industry-culture-of-misogyny-says-new-government-report), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/jan/30/britains-world-class-music-industry-has-a-dark-secret-its-still-a-boys-club)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/ndas-should-be-banned-to-curb-music-industry-culture-of-misogyny-says-new-government-report), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/29/sexual-harassment-and-racism-endemic-in-uk-music-sector), [[6]](https://committees.parliament.uk/work/6736/misogyny-in-music/news/198229/committee-invites-evidence-on-the-use-of-ndas-in-the-music-industry/)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/ndas-should-be-banned-to-curb-music-industry-culture-of-misogyny-says-new-government-report), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/29/sexual-harassment-and-racism-endemic-in-uk-music-sector)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/ndas-should-be-banned-to-curb-music-industry-culture-of-misogyny-says-new-government-report> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/jun/04/ndas-should-be-banned-to-curb-music-industry-culture-of-misogyny-says-new-government-report> - A recent UK government report recommends banning non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in the music industry to address the prevalent culture of misogyny. The report highlights the misuse of NDAs to silence victims of harassment and abuse, urging immediate action to tackle these issues. Despite previous findings of widespread misogyny and discrimination, little progress has been made, with the industry still described as a 'boys’ club'. The report calls for the implementation of measures to protect women and gender non-conforming individuals in the sector.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-68667119> - A BBC News article reports that a significant number of women in the UK music industry experience discrimination, with one-third reporting sexual harassment at work. The findings, based on the UK Musicians' Census, reveal that women are eight times more likely to face discrimination than men. The report also highlights issues such as unequal pay and shorter career spans for women, despite higher levels of training and education. The article underscores the need for the industry to address these systemic inequalities.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/jan/30/britains-world-class-music-industry-has-a-dark-secret-its-still-a-boys-club> - In this opinion piece, Charisse Beaumont, CEO of Black Lives in Music, discusses the systemic barriers and biases women, particularly Black women, face in the UK music industry. She highlights issues such as underrepresentation, discrimination, and abuse, and calls for the banning of NDAs used to silence victims. Beaumont also emphasizes the importance of intersectionality in addressing these challenges and advocates for the activation of section 14 of the Equality Act to provide protection against combined discrimination.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/29/sexual-harassment-and-racism-endemic-in-uk-music-sector> - A Guardian article reports on the prevalence of sexual harassment and racism in the UK music sector, citing a 2022 report by the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM). The report found that 66% of survey respondents experienced some form of discrimination, with many incidents going unreported due to fear of retaliation. The article highlights the need for industry-wide action to address these issues and protect workers from discrimination and inappropriate behaviors.
6. <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/6736/misogyny-in-music/news/198229/committee-invites-evidence-on-the-use-of-ndas-in-the-music-industry/> - The UK Parliament's Women and Equalities Committee is seeking evidence on the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in the music industry as part of its inquiry into misogyny in the sector. The committee aims to understand the extent to which NDAs are used to silence victims of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, or abuse. It invites written evidence from individuals who have signed or have experience with such NDAs, emphasizing the importance of transparency and accountability in addressing these issues.
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-legal-measures-to-protect-workers-from-misuse-of-non-disclosure-agreements> - The UK government has announced new legal measures to protect workers from the misuse of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs). The proposals include legislating that workplace confidentiality agreements cannot prevent individuals from reporting harassment or discrimination to the police. Additionally, the plans aim to ensure that workers agreeing to confidentiality agreements receive independent legal advice on their limitations. These measures are part of the government's efforts to create a fairer workplace and address concerns about the abuse of NDAs to conceal misconduct.