



Can Music Make You Sick? Music and Depression

A study into the incidence of musicians' mental health

Part 1: Pilot Survey Report

Help Musicians UK

Authors: Sally Anne Gross and Dr. George Musgrave

University of Westminster / MusicTank

November, 2016

About This Paper

Help Musicians UK commissioned this report (the first UK academic study on the incidence of mental health and musicians) in response to the charity's observation around the rise in the number of calls and applications from musicians with mental health problems and is seeking to understand and quantify their significance as well as find solutions to this issue within the industry. This report is part one of a more extensive research project that will follow in 2017.

Written by:

Sally Anne Gross
Dr. George Musgrave
University of Westminster / MusicTank

Published by:

MusicTank Publishing
University of Westminster
Watford Road, Harrow,
Middlesex
HA1 3TP
musictank.co.uk | @musictank

First Published London, November, 2016
Copyright © 2016 University of Westminster

The copyright in this publication is held by University of Westminster. This material may not be copied or reproduced wholly or in part for any purpose (commercial or otherwise) except for permitted fair dealing under the Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988, without the prior written permission of University of Westminster.

The copyright owner has used reasonable endeavours to identify the proprietors of third-party intellectual property included in this work. The author would be grateful for notification of any material whose ownership has been misidentified herein, so that errors and omissions as to attribution may be corrected in future editions.

ISBN: 978-1-909750-11-1



About Help Musicians UK

Help Musicians UK is the leading independent music charity in the country. It has an unrivalled reputation for providing health and welfare support to working and retired musicians and also provides additional investment in organisations as well as emerging and mid-career artists to further artistic development.

Its independence enables the charity to be a truly representative voice for musicians and the wider industry. In preparation for its centenary the charity has set the ambitious fundraising target of raising £21m by 2021.

Registered charity No. 228089 020 7239 9100

helpmusicians.org.uk

Table of Contents

Summary Findings.....	5
Introduction.....	6
1.1. Context.....	6
1.2. Aims, Objectives & Remit.....	7
1.3. Survey Sample.....	8
Findings.....	11
2.1 The Problem is Real.....	11
2.2 Music Helps, a Musical Career Doesn't	12
2.3 A Demand for Change	15
Conclusions.....	16
Case Studies	18
1: Lauren Aquilina – Artist, signed to Island Records/ Universal Music Group.....	18
2: James Rhodes - Concert Pianist.....	21
3: Conrad Thompson – Drum & Bass MC, songwriter and producer	23
4: William Doyle – solo artist, formerly East India Youth.....	25
Report Details.....	28
APPENDICES	29
Appendix 1: Graphical Summaries of Survey Questions	30
Appendix 2: Raw Data: Survey Respondents' Freeform Responses	41

Summary Findings

A recent University of Westminster pilot survey of 2,211 self-identifying professional musicians working across a broad swathe of the UK music industry found that:

- **71.1% of respondents believed they had experienced incidences of anxiety and panic attacks**
- **68.5% of respondents experienced incidences of depression**

Office for National Statistics data (2010-13) indicated that nearly 1 in 5 of the population suffer from anxiety and/ or depression (aged 16 years +). **This research suggests that musicians could be up to three times more likely to suffer from depression compared to the general public*.**

Yet the majority of respondents felt underserved by available help:

- **52.7% found it difficult to get help**
- **54.8% considered there were gaps in the provision of available help**

These early, preliminary findings suggest that music, and by this we mean working in, or having ambitions to work in, the music industry, might indeed be making musicians sick, or at least contribute towards their levels of mental ill-health.

* According to the ONS (2013), nearly 1 in 5 (19%) of people in the UK aged 16 years or over experienced anxiety or depression (using the GHQ method which asked if they had experienced these things 'recently') in 2010-11. This was consistent across the two subsequent years for which ONS data is available (ONS, 2015), with 18.3% of people (nearly 1 in 5) similarly responding in both 2011-12, and again in 2012-13.

Source (accessed Sept 2016): ONS Measuring National Well-being: Health, 2013 (2013): http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766_310300.pdf
ONS Measuring National Well-being: Life in the UK, 2015 (2015): http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766_398059.pdf

Please contact G.Musgrave@westminster.ac.uk for further details.

Introduction

In August 2014, Help Musicians UK published the results of its survey into the health and wellbeing of professional musicians in the UK. As the UK's leading charity for professional musicians working in any musical genre and at any stage in their careers, Help Musicians UK is focused on delivering the highest level of support tailored specifically to the needs of musicians.

As part of the charity's continued commitment to developing first class services, and in light of the findings from its initial Health and Wellbeing Survey (2014), Help Musicians UK commissioned a new, specific study into the mental health issues faced by musicians and the wider music industry workforce. With a remit to support professionals whose income from musical work provides the majority of their earnings, Help Musicians UK looked to extend their previous research base to a wider, more inclusive cohort of music professionals. This was to be achieved by increasing the participation age range, widening the breadth of musical genres, and extending its focus to include those who might be categorised more generally as creative labourers, including artist managers, producers, songwriters and others. This new research conducted by a team from the University of Westminster, entitled Music and Depression, is the largest survey of its kind ever carried out in the UK, to-date.

1.1. Context

"You don't have to be mad to work here, but it helps"

In Western culture, there is a pervasive idea circulating that creativity and madness are somehow related. However, there are as many confusing and conflicting opinions on the subject of their relationship, as there are on the idea of creativity itself, and indeed mental wellbeing. Yet within this discussion, beyond individual biographies, little attention has been paid to how musicians themselves, and other

workers along the supply chain of this complex and competitive cultural ecology we call 'the music industry', experience these conditions as a workforce. How do these workers feel about their work, the world they inhabit, and, crucially, their mental wellbeing?

The romantic rhetoric of the tortured musician is embedded in the Western history of popular music, from classical composers including Schumann, Mahler and Rachmaninov through to the enduring myth of tragic rock stars, such as Janis Joplin, Kurt Cobain, and Hendrix. However, attempts at mapping the emotional and psychological wellbeing of musicians working and seeking to forge careers within the music industry have largely been absent, with arguments often rooted in an unhelpful, individualistic and dismissive pathologisation of creative or affective labour. Anecdotally, and rather tellingly, when discussing this research with music industry professionals and even amongst academics, we have been met by a reverse kind of scepticism; a frequent "well, of course musicians are all mad!", "oh well, artists love to moan don't they", or most frequently, "they should try getting a real job". It is this very position that informs why we are asking the workers - musicians, solo performers, agents and managers, sound engineers, tour managers – how they feel. How are they psychologically experiencing working in the music industry, and what can we learn about the emotional conditions of this labour? We were not asking people for their medical records or doctors' notes, but seeking to examine how these cultural workers experience and understand their health issues in relation to the work they do, and exploring what we can learn from their accounts.

1.2. Aims, Objectives & Remit

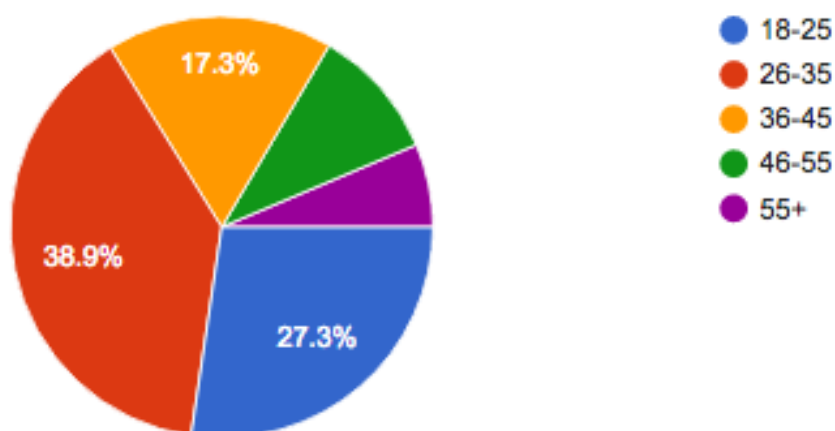
The focus of this research was to hear directly from professional musicians, aspiring musicians, and workers within the wider music industry, about how they feel about their working conditions, and how they perceive working in the music industry to affect their mental wellbeing.

In this initial phase of the research, we were seeking to ascertain the scale of the 'problem' as understood from the perspective of this workforce. In order to do this, we launched a survey comprised of ten simple questions, with space at the end for respondents to share additional comments. At this stage, we were not asking any of the respondents to qualify or evidence their professional status or what percentage of their income was derived from their professional musical work. Instead, the guiding objective here was to listen to what these self-identifying professionals have to say about their chosen profession, and how it is affecting them. Interestingly, the subject of self-evaluation, judgement and validation was very evident in the feedback, as a source of both concern and stress.

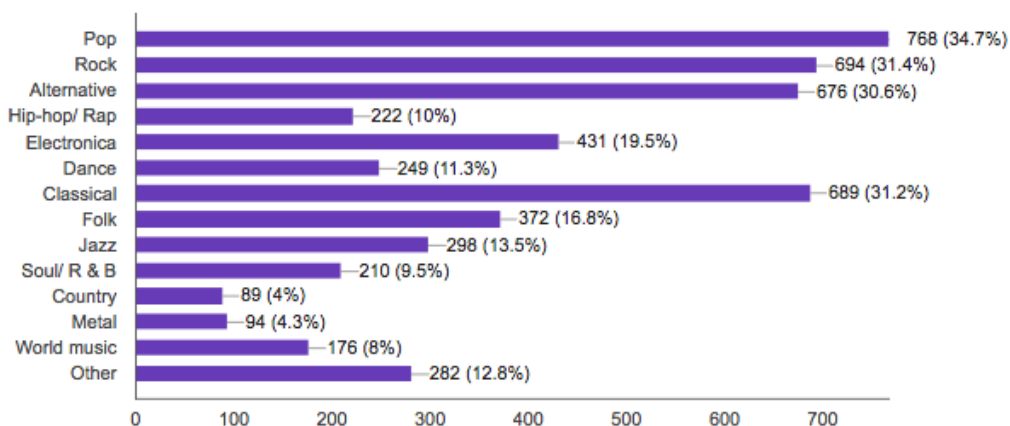
1.3. Survey Sample

2,211 musicians responded to our online survey (conducted May/June 2016), making this the largest ever survey of its kind in the UK. In contrast to Help Musicians UK earlier August 2014 survey, the respondents to this survey were younger, and there is a larger representation from the popular music field, with classical musicians making up 31.2%.

Survey Data: Age:



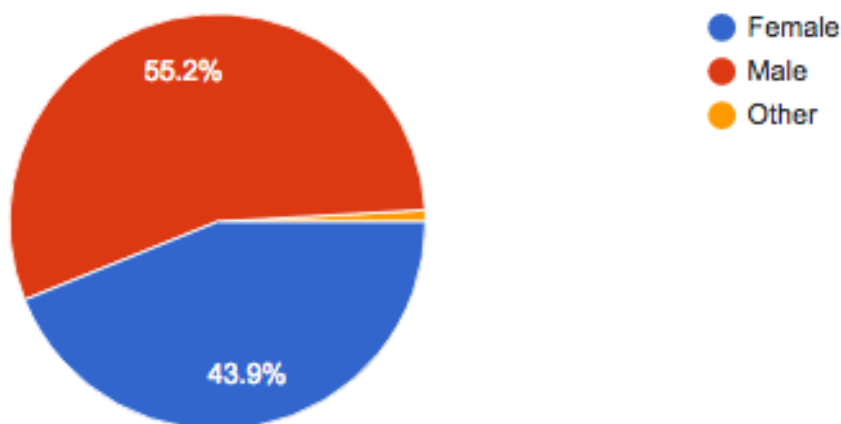
Survey Data: What Best Describes The Musical Areas You Work In:



Respondents were contacted via a number of channels. The online Google Forms survey was facilitated by MusicTank, University of Westminster, who together with Help Musicians UK, signposted and further disseminated the survey by social media, music industry trade press (including Music Week, Record of The Day, CMU and Unsigned Guide) and industry associations including the Musicians' Union, AIM, FAC, MMF and the MPG. Unlike the 2014 Health and Wellbeing Survey, our call for respondents this time was not limited to those whom Help Musicians UK had offered support to in the past.

There was a relatively even male/ female split (55.2%/ 43.9%), which was almost the reverse of the 2014 survey (women comprising 54% of that survey).

Survey Data: Gender:



The majority of respondents (66.2%) were between the ages of 18-35.

The largest group of respondents described themselves as musicians (39%). These musicians were working in genres as varied as Pop (34.7%), Hip Hop (10%), Electronica and Dance (30.8%) and Metal (4%). As perhaps expected, there were a large number of respondents from London (39.5%), but many experiences were shared by artists from across the United Kingdom, demonstrating the geographical breadth of feeling on this subject.

Survey Data: Location



It is important to acknowledge two things at this stage vis-à-vis the survey cohort:

1. Respondents self-identified as professional musicians;
2. Respondents self-identified as having 'mental health' issues ranging from anxiety to depression and bi-polar. Researchers did not medically verify these conditions, although many participants spoke of being hospitalised.

This survey was designed to find out how much of a problem musical workers perceived mental health issues to be. The answer was startlingly clear: **mental health is an enormous problem.**

Findings

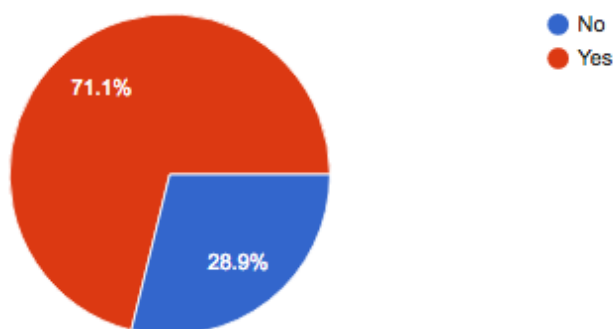
The primary findings of our survey can be subcategorised into three headings:

2.1. The Problem is Real

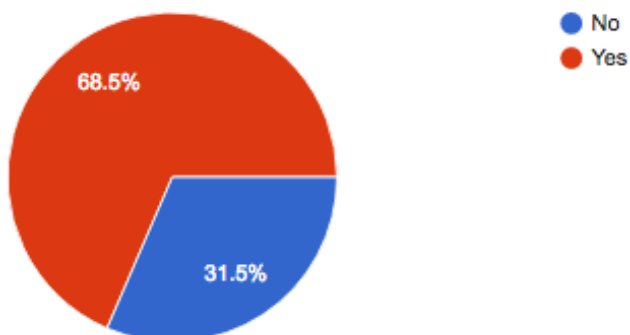
The most striking of all our findings was that irrespective of genre, **musicians are suffering from anxiety and depression in huge numbers.**

- 71.1% of all respondents admitted to having suffered from panic attacks and/or high levels of anxiety, and;
- 68.5% suggested they had suffered from depression.

Survey Data: Have you ever suffered from panic attacks and/or high levels of anxiety?



Survey Data: Have you ever suffered from depression?



Data collected from the Office for National Statistics between 2010 and 2013 in their reports on *'Measuring National Well-being'*, suggests that, of those over the age of 16 in the UK, nearly 1 in 5 of the population suffer from anxiety and/or depression. **This therefore suggests that musicians could be up to three times more likely to suffer from depression compared to the general public*.**

To many, of course, this finding is not an altogether surprising one. As suggested, the paradoxically romanticised pathologisation of artistry may very well lead one to reasonably hypothesise numbers such as these. However, our second finding is crucial in helping us to understand the potential source of this psychological unease amongst musicians.

2.2 Music Helps, a Musical Career Doesn't

The second finding to emerge from this survey was that **whereas artists find solace in the production of music, the working conditions of forging a musical career are traumatic.** This is a fundamental and important finding. Whilst it is a widely held perspective that creating music attracts people with particular psychological tendencies, the message that came through in the survey was clear: **music making is therapeutic, but making a career out of music is destructive.** As one respondent succinctly stated: "The only thing that causes depression for musicians is the music industry itself". This theme was echoed again and again in the 'Comments' section of our survey:

"I find, on the whole, music to be a great release which helps when I'm feeling anxious or depressed...[However], the stresses of being in the music industry, for me, are a big cause of uncertainty which to leads to stress, anxiety and depression."

*For full reference please refer to footnote on page 5

*“My depression is made worse by trying to exist as a musician... Rarely has playing music been detrimental to my health, quite the opposite...but the industry and socio-economic pressures...make this a f*****g s**** industry to try and make a living in”*

“I’m not sure I’d say it’s the music that makes me sick. It’s the lack of things I’d consider success. It’s the lack of support doing something that’s not considered “real work””

“I LOVED my job; but it did not love me”

These early, preliminary findings suggest that music, and by this we mean working in, or having ambitions to work in, the music industry, might indeed be making musicians sick, or at least contribute towards their levels of mental ill-health.

Fundamentally, respondents suggested that structural composition of the music industry negatively impacted their mental health due to **poor working conditions**. Central to this is the profound difficulty of sustaining a living. The industry was said to contribute towards high levels of anxiety and depression given the precarious nature of the work, an inability to plan ones time/ future, the nature self-employment, anti-social hours, exhaustion, and, crucially, low or often zero pay. As one respondent beautifully articulated:

“A plumber doesn’t work for ‘experience’; a doctor doesn’t perform surgery for ‘exposure’”

Other answers provided included:

- a lack of recognition for one's work (be this from friends and family not seeing it as 'real work' or from others within the industry expecting musicians to tolerate unprofessional behaviour and being unappreciated for their labour);
- a lack of transparency in contracts;
- the welding of music and identity into one's own idea of selfhood (and the impact a lack of perceived success can have on this);
- a frustration with live venues in the UK, particularly regarding sound quality.

Finally, respondents also mentioned the physical dangers of a musical career (for instance Repetitive Strain Injuries, in particular from classical musicians), and issues related to the problems of being a woman in the industry - from balancing work and family commitments, to sexist attitudes and even sexual harassment.

It is of vital importance that we dig *much deeper* into the detail of these findings in order to more clearly understand the particular compositional characteristics which musicians feel contribute towards their prevailing sense of mental ill-health. Only by understanding these wider structural features of what one respondent called "the exploitative rollercoaster" of the music industry in the United Kingdom, can we seek to not only better understand this industry, but also, better suggest ways that we might seek to remedy, or at least mitigate, this epidemic of anxiety, panic attacks and depression amongst creative workers. This desire to understand these industrial dynamics, and in particular, the extent to which they might be unique or not to the music industry, will be the motivation behind Part 2 of this nationwide project.

2.3 A Demand for Change

The third finding to emerge from the survey was that musicians feel that there are gaps in existing provision, and that something needs to change. Whilst certainly charities such as Help Musicians UK are a vital resource to artists, a number of key concerns were raised. **These issues were threefold:**

1. In the first instance, sourcing available help is both time-consuming and difficult. That is, the help which is currently available, be it NHS, private or charitable, is not always easy to learn about and/ or access;
2. Secondly, there is sense that when help is provided, there is an overreliance on unwanted, often unhelpful, and expensive pharmaceutical solutions i.e. anti-depressants;
3. Finally, non-pharmacological help which is available is often hugely expensive, which, in the context of an industry which is typified by incredibly low earnings, makes it near impossible to access.

Conclusions

We were aghast at the scale of response to this survey. Certainly, the design of the survey itself was not perfect. From a lack of nuance within the questioning (a perennial bane of survey construction), to a self-selection bias in that, of course, respondents most likely to be suffering were more likely to respond, this exercise was not a methodologically perfect one. However, in the first instance, it is crucial for the individual to recognise they are unwell, either mentally or physically, and in this sense, the survey may have been an important first step for many. More generally though, we, as researchers, needed *to start asking important questions*. It was clear from the comments and responses that opening this subject up for investigation and discussion was overwhelmingly well received by musicians and music industry workers. The response was very positive, and one of relief that somebody had decided to take on this complex and difficult subject.

This survey was therefore a vital first step at seeking to understand how musicians in the UK experience mental health concerns, suggesting where the source of their ill-health might be emanating from, and in beginning to find ways we might seek to offer support.

It is of vital importance that we build on the crucial findings generated by this preliminary Part 1 survey. Having identified the scale of the problem facing musicians today, we must develop our work on findings (2) and (3), in order to both understand the compositional stresses facing artists, and offer policy solutions to better help musicians.

For this reason, Part 2 of this research will qualitatively delve into the crucial finding of this survey: the link between the compositional structure of the music industry and the mental health of those working within it. Indeed, these structural connections have been made in other industries; for example, the link between the stresses

placed on models in the fashion industry and the subsequent development of conditions such as body dysmorphia or anorexia are well accepted. The suggestion herein is that similar institutional dangers exist in the music industry. We must better understand, and more systematically categorise, these risks.

Finally, Part 3 of this research will, be exploring a range of solutions that might be offered to musicians and others within the music industry, to better help them cope with the vicissitudes of an insecure industry.

Case Studies

1: Lauren Aquilina – Artist, signed to Island Records/ Universal Music Group

Lauren Aquilina is a 21-year-old singer-songwriter from Bristol, who has been living in London for the past year. Following huge success with three independently released EPs, she signed a record deal with Island Records (Universal Music Group), and a publishing deal with Sony/ BMG, at the age of 19. She is currently preparing to release her debut album entitled 'Isn't It Strange?'

"When I was about 14 or 15 I started making YouTube videos and putting covers and originals on the Internet. When I left school, I signed to Island Records and signed a publishing deal with BMG. That was two and a half years ago and since then I have been writing a lot and making my album. I moved to Shepherds Bush this time last year. I'm still living off my [recording and publishing] deals at the moment... There's definitely a time limit on it - I'm very aware of that..."

"The best things [about being an artist] for me are writing... Writing is the thing that I feel most strongly about and most passionately about. The fact I get to do that for a job is amazing. The connections and friendships that I've built with people that listen to my music have been sometimes life saving for me... [Having said that] there are so many things that come with the music industry that aren't necessarily music related, such as knowing that your money is going to run out eventually, which all contribute towards how I'm feeling now..."

"For example, there's the lack of routine. I would hate having a 9-to-5 job. But you go from being so exhaustingly busy, and then you look at your calendar and you have nothing on for the next two weeks. I get so depressed. I struggle with that. There is pressure in every job, [but] I feel like in the music industry there's this thing

of either you are smashing it or you're a failure. There's no in between... I would say that there's a [small] team of people [within the industry] who can single-handedly decide where your life is going for the next year, and that has been a really difficult thing for me to wrap my head around. One side of me is like, 'Oh my god, this team of people have just decided they don't like you and they've ruined this for you, potentially. Doesn't that make you hate them?' And then the other side says, 'maybe you just weren't good enough, maybe you need to fight for this, maybe you need to write better songs, maybe it's not their fault and they have to make tough decisions.' I'm dealing with that right now...

"[That being said], I've found most of my criticism has come from other artists – my competitors... I hate the fact that I call them competitors... The way that my label, my radio pluggers and my manager talk about them, they become competitors and that's what I see them as. But quite often I'm also a big fan of these artists, so it's a conflict. I would never say anything bad about them, or bitch, or do anything. But the business side of me has to see them in that way because it's like every man for himself here...

Sometimes you forget that these people are also a business and they're not just your friends, they're not just here to help you... I had a session recently where I turned up to this guy's house – I'd travelled pretty far for it as well, it was an hour and a half journey. There had actually been quite a quick turn around just the week before and the label had suddenly said, "we want you to deliver your album now as we want it to come out at this point." So I turned up to this guy's house, and he was like, "so wait, your album's finished?" "Well, yeah. It happened quite quickly." And then he just kicked me out. He said, "you're not worth my time." The producer had realised that because Lauren's album was already finished, there was no way he could have a song included on it – a 'cut' – and therefore was unlikely to be paid for the work he was about to do. Instead of making music together, he ultimately decided to throw her out.

“I have been thinking more recently about writing a CV, and what else I would do. All my friends are finishing university. I don't have a degree, I don't have very good A-levels. My only work experience is in music and a Saturday job in retail... I don't know how to get a job that I love when I feel like I have no experience. I don't know if I've wasted the past 3 years trying to do music if it was never going to work out... Music became my identity... Now, I'm in a position where I'm not sure if music is going to be my life.”

“I would argue that probably a lot of songwriters, especially, are a bit mad to begin with. But I definitely feel that I'm 10 times worse now than I was 3 years ago... Writing a song has never made me unhappy. Sometimes I've been, like, 'that's not a great song, but oh well, I got something out of it.' That's never made me unhappy, but it's the industry, it's the game. It's the game that makes you unhappy.”

2: James Rhodes - Concert Pianist

James Rhodes is a British concert pianist. He was the first classical pianist to sign a record deal with Warner Bros, has released six albums, and performs globally. He also contributes to publications including The Guardian and The Telegraph, and has presented documentaries on BBC Four and Channel 4. His international bestselling memoir *'Instrumental'* was published last year.

"I would fall in love with these pieces of music when I was a little boy, and now being able to play them myself, it fosters this real sense of just a kind of wow factor. The travel is great, being able to record. I suppose most of all just being able to do what I've always wanted to do. How many people can say that?... [Music is] my first and longest lasting love. It's been my best friend for as long as I can remember."

"[That being said] the worst things are the loneliness and the pressure – constant pressure I put on myself. It doesn't really come from outside. I'm not really worried about the critics or the press. I feel like I have to live up to a certain standard otherwise it's not good enough and I can never really attain that standard. A lot of time on my own either practicing at a piano or travelling... You don't have a set routine as well. And that's difficult... You don't get on the tube at the same time every day, and you could be in three countries in a week, and everything is different all the time. So that can be challenging. And nerves of course can be challenging as well... Also you've got to be really careful when you're doing something that's so personal, and you're exposing yourself in that way to criticism and abuse and whatever."

James wrote an article in 2013 in The Guardian entitled ['Find What You Love and Let it Kill You'](#). Speaking about this article, he said:

"[To succeed in music] you have to work for years, decades, tens of thousands of hours. You have to practically let it kill to have any chance!..."

In that article he wrote:

“[I had] no income for five years, six hours a day of intense practice, monthly four-day long lessons with a brilliant and psychopathic teacher in Verona, a hunger for something that was so necessary it cost me my marriage, nine months in a mental hospital, most of my dignity and about 35lbs in weight. And the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is not perhaps the Disney ending I'd envisaged as I lay in bed aged 10”

*“I trusted that if I did do it then the money would come if it was meant to, and I would be taken care of, and that's what's happened. But, you know, I've had a lot of help: my manager, my touring company, and record labels... It hasn't been me on my own. I think it would be very hard if it was just me and a SoundCloud account trying to get money and touring... As far as earning a living and forming a business, you've got to get help. You need management, if you can, and a record label. But, record labels are usually filled with ***s who just want to ***k you... There are a lot of charlatans.*

“It's not that it's “hard” to be a musician; it's hard to make a living at it. A lot of that is down to the industry, and a lot of it is down to just the fact that it's a really tough gig... I'm in a very lucky position because I have a full calendar and I'm earning well, but I think if I was starting out now it's really challenging. You need a lot of support.

“I mean, of course it's who you know, isn't it? That's one of the biggest things. You've either got to be really lucky or you need to know someone... but also you need to be resourceful. The only reason [my career took off] is because I decided, ‘Who's my very favourite pianist in the world? Who's his agent?’ I found it out. I sent him a bottle of champagne and I sent him an email. I chased them. And he agreed to meet me. But that came from me. He didn't just knock on my door and say, ‘Hey, do you want to play the piano to me?’ You've got to be quite cheeky, I think, and resourceful.”

3: Conrad Thompson – Drum & Bass MC, songwriter and producer

Conrad Thompson is a leading figure in the world of Drum and Bass and has been a professional musician working in urban, dance and electronic music as a vocalist, producer and collaborator for 30 years now. During which time he has performed to thousands of people all over the globe and experienced all the highs and lows a career in music has to offer. A few years ago a series of events in both his professional and personal life meant that Conrad found himself in an extremely difficult position and by chance he found Help Musicians UK through an advert in the PRS (Performing Rights Society) magazine and called them. Here he explains what happened...

“They (Help Musicians UK) were a final cry for help when resources from friends and family had dried up. I reached a point where I thought I was going to be alright, and a few things triggered in my home situation that actually put me further back than I thought I was. And I was about to lose my home. I didn’t really want to be a musician anymore, but I thought if I was going to get some help from somewhere then I’ve got history strong enough to verify that I’m a musician that needs help.”

Help Musicians UK were able to help Conrad with his financial emergency, and offered him practical help too - a series of sessions with a music industry mentor, which he found especially useful.

“They gave me a mentor, which was very, very helpful, because it was a non-biased professional ear and voice that I could use as a sounding board. That was really helpful.

“We’d do an hour every week at a specific time. We’d do some emails in between, but we’d communicate for an hour. And we’d spend some time just looking at different creative ideas, away from being the main stage performer, which I’d been for all these years. It wasn’t just that, he was open to anything. If I had said, “I want to

get back on stage”, he would look at ways of doing that. I was looking at channelling my energies into going back to something that I did before music, which was food and cooking, and going into education. All the different avenues, he’d explore them and give them credibility; audit them in a way that I could look at them and go, “right that makes sense, that’s going to take that amount of time.” And knowing that it wasn’t coming from a place where he was going to make out of it, or he had somebody’s vested interests. That was very important. Because friends and family can help, but if they don’t understand what it is you’re trying to achieve, and don’t have a good understanding of how that’s achievable, it can kind of contradict what you’re trying to do.”

The fact that Conrad had discovered people who understood his needs was especially appreciated.

“I never disconnected from my musical self. I put my musical self into a box of luxury and it was becoming a hobby. If I was going to be creative, that was something that I would allow myself to do, much in the same way that someone would go fishing, or would go to the pub.”

“Knowing that there is help is a sense of security. Without making that call, that seemed a far off fantasy that that help applied to me. And that diffused that, to the point that I’d like to go to other musicians and say, “if you need help, phone up and speak to them.

“The exchange of art into commerce is a very strange exchange. And so it’s never going to be one thing for all or one thing for another, it’s a balance. Finding the place where it balances for the individual is important and you can’t predict it. I think just apply some kind of rules to it, for your own sake, even if you throw those rules out of the window later on down the line, at least you got to test if it was good or bad, A or

B. At some point it won't be so rocky and you'll find a very balanced place to go forward on."

4: William Doyle – solo artist, formerly East India Youth

William Doyle is the real name of the recording artist formally known as East India Youth. William's first's album was enthusiastically received by the independent music community and shortlisted for the Mercury Music Prize in 2014. Within a very short space of time he found himself catapulted into the music industry spotlight, signed to a record label and on a world tour and recording his second album. William has been a musician since his early teens and before evolving into a solo artist had spent several years in a band as he explains here:

"I've always wanted music to be job, I suppose. I decided that when I was about 14, I think. So I was in bands and stuff at the time. When I left college I had one year out – well, it was meant to be. I didn't end up going to university in the end because the band I was in started playing more, and we were like, 'this is good, this seems to be going alright. Why don't we try give it a shot?'"

For many artists the pressure of touring and the pressure they put themselves under; the eternal cycle of expectation and ambition coupled with self-criticism and anxiety is crippling and that feeling of self- imposed pressure is clearly articulated by William.

"And when I did get home I couldn't work on anything. I didn't have the concentration to do anything, and I was trying to make stuff and getting really, really, really frustrated. I was drinking a lot, and smoking a lot, and just had a terrible diet, and everything and no exercise."

William found himself touring and promoting his work for nearly three years without any real breaks and now feels that artists could be better informed and supported through these intense working periods.

*“The main key really is that there needs to be better resources for people to really truly understand what it’s like. If you have to, like I have, check out from it a bit, that’s almost seen as a weakness. Maybe I’m only projecting it on myself as well, I don’t know, but I definitely feel like, ‘You’re only going to be this successful if you f*****g get out there and keep doing it till it kills you.’ And then it’s like ‘no, that’s not what it’s about.’ You can be very successful and not do that.”*

“It wasn’t like XL were going, ‘you’ve got to tour this much.’ But there’s a feeling of like they want you to be on these festival bills in certain spots for perception’s sake. And I wonder how useful that stuff is, really. It’s great to be on the bill. You know, it’s cool. But it’s also not everything. What I realised is that I love performing and I hate touring, basically.

Getting caught up in the music industry hype and the distance between the myth and the reality of working in the music business is a big challenge and the need for help in the way of guidelines is something many of the survey respondents mentioned. William has very strong opinions about this:

“Education. You need to be educated about these things. No one tells you what it’s going to be like, and you go your whole childhood wanting to be in the music industry, and be a touring musician – however much glory that brings you or whatever you want out of it. And no one tells you along that journey, ‘You can get that, that can be yours. You can achieve fulfilment and happiness. But there’s also all this other shit that comes as a cost to that.’ No one tells you that.”

In 2016 William made the decision to take some much needed time off and to move on from his East India Youth project. He moved out of London and has since started working on himself and new music in a way that feels better for his health and wellbeing.

“And I’m really conscious about how I control environments that I’m going to play in next time round when it comes to touring. In fact, I’m actually quite looking forward to touring again, despite everything I’ve said. Because I feel like if I can carry on making the progress that I feel like I’ve made over the last six-months into myself, then maybe I will be able to have a better experience next time I do it that has less demands on me and everyone else working with me to do it. So that’s really good. I feel good about things going forward.”

Report Details

Lead Researcher & Author:

Sally Gross, BA Hons. LLB, LLM - Course Leader, Principal lecturer MA Music Business Management | S.Gross01@westminster.ac.uk

Co-author:

Dr. George Musgrave, Senior Lecturer, MA Music Business Management
G.Musgrave@westminster.ac.uk | @Context__ | @DrGMusgrave

Project Management:

Jonathan Robinson & Jenny Tyler, MusicTank, University of Westminster
jonathan@musictank.co.uk | +44 (0) 20 8357 7317 | musictank.co.uk

MusicTank is a unique, non-profit information hub for music industry business, owned and operated by University of Westminster.

University of Westminster is an exempt charity and company limited by guarantee. Registered in England 977818. Registered address: 309 Regent Street, London, W1B 2UW

Report completed August, 2016

Report commissioned by: Help Musicians UK

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Graphical Summaries of Survey Questions

University of Westminster was commissioned to carry out a pilot study and survey to assess the incidence of depression and anxiety in UK musicians.

The survey launched on Friday 20th May 2016 at The Great Escape music industry conference in Brighton, England, and concluded on Monday 27 June 2016.

The survey was so constructed as to ensure efficient data capture, and to provide a clean data set, free of complicating variables. At the request of Help Musicians UK, this study focused purely on the incidence of depression and anxiety within its target group – self-identifying professional musicians and ‘creative labourers’, including artist managers, producers, songwriters, sound engineers and others.

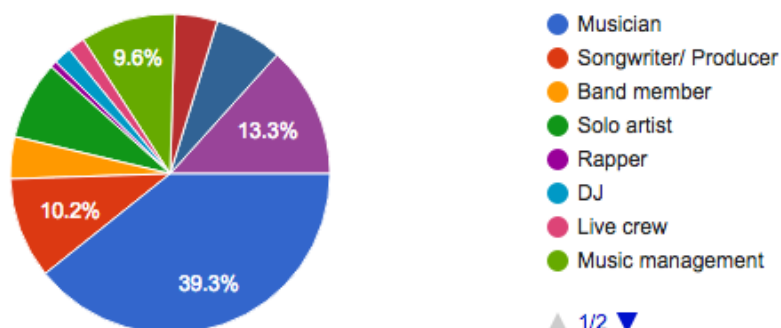
In engaging 2,211 respondents across a broad range of music genre, this represents the largest known academic study of this nature in the UK.

Appendix 1:

HM UK Music Industry Mental Health Survey: FINAL RESULTS

SECTION 1: YOUR WORK & YOUR MUSIC - 1) Which of the following terms best describes your occupation?

(2211 responses)

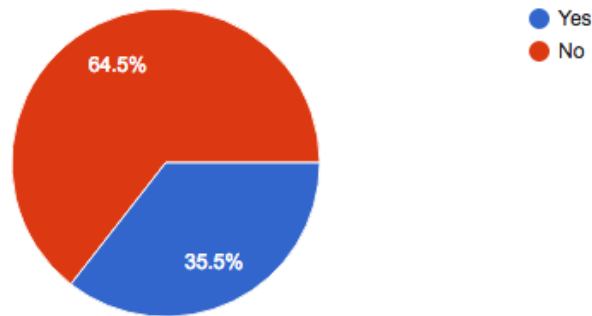


- Audio production (recording studios, live sound etc.)
- Label or music publisher
- Other...

▲ 2/2 ▼

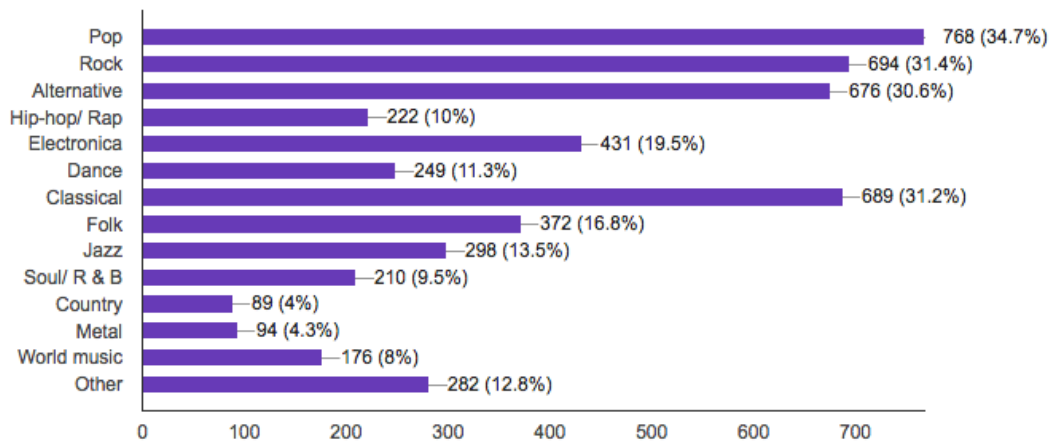
SECTION 1: YOUR WORK & YOUR MUSIC - 2) Do you work in one specific musical genre?

(2211 responses)

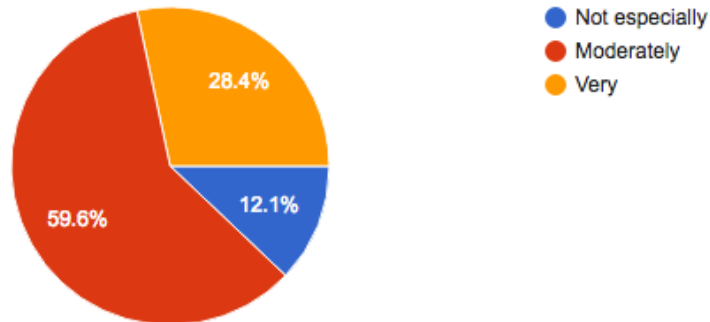


2a) If YES, please select 1 of the following. If NO, please select the top 3 that best describe the musical areas you work in?

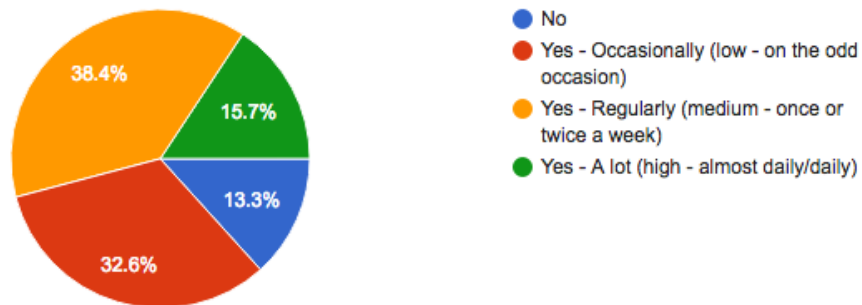
(2211 responses)



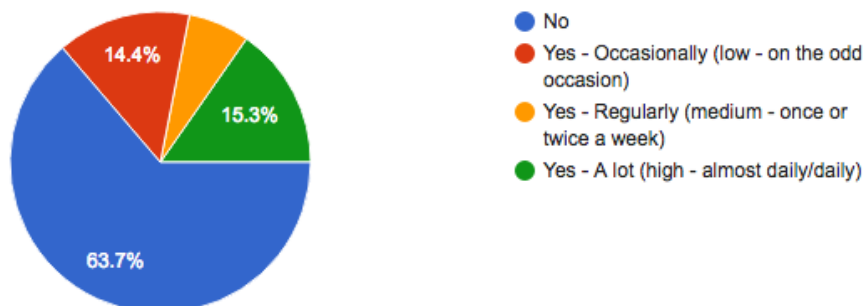
SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 1) Are you health conscious? (2211 responses)



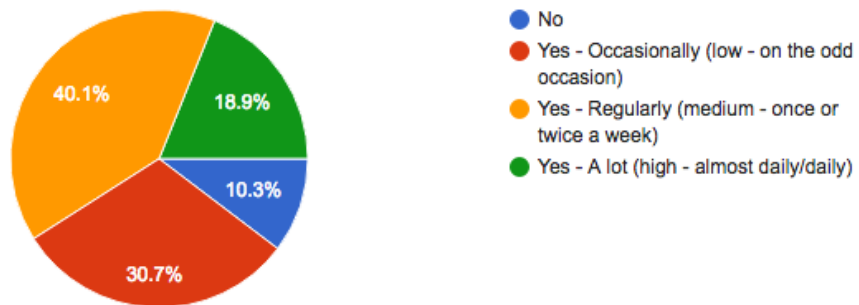
SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 2) Do you take regular exercise? (2211 responses)



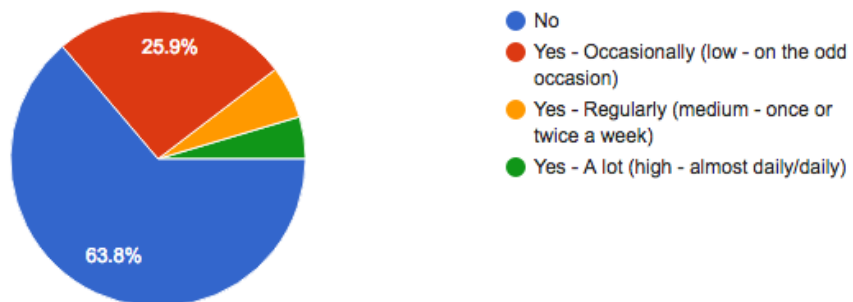
SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 3) Do you smoke? (2211 responses)



SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 4) Do you drink alcohol? (2211 responses)

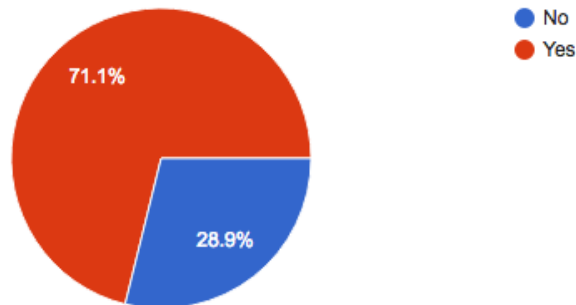


SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 5) Do you take recreational drugs? (2211 responses)

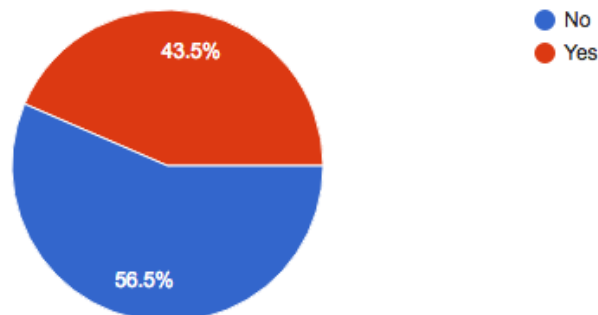


SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 6) Have you ever suffered from panic attacks and/or high levels of anxiety?

(2211 responses)

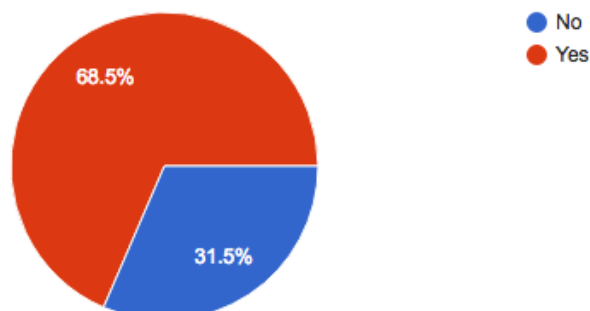


6a) If YES, did you receive treatment? (If No, please move to Q7) (1758 responses)



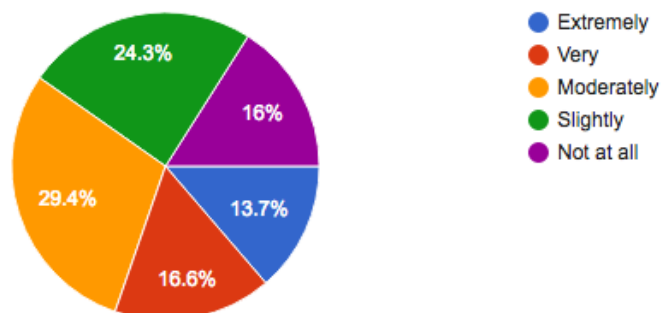
SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 7) Have you ever suffered from depression?

(2211 responses)



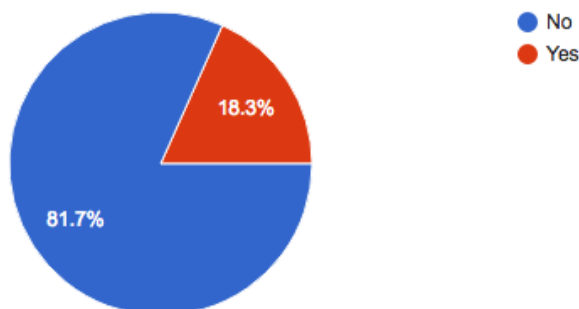
7a) If YES, how likely are you (or have you been) to seek help? (If NO, move to Q8)

(1570 responses)



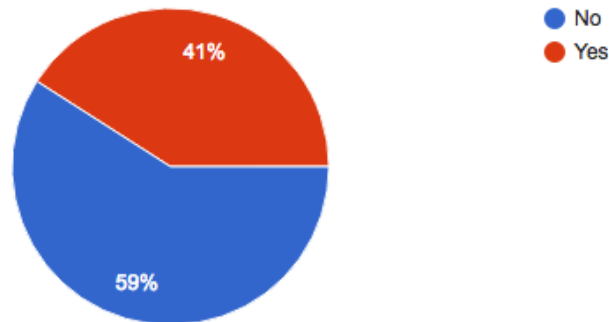
SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 8) Have you ever suffered from any other mental illness?

(2211 responses)

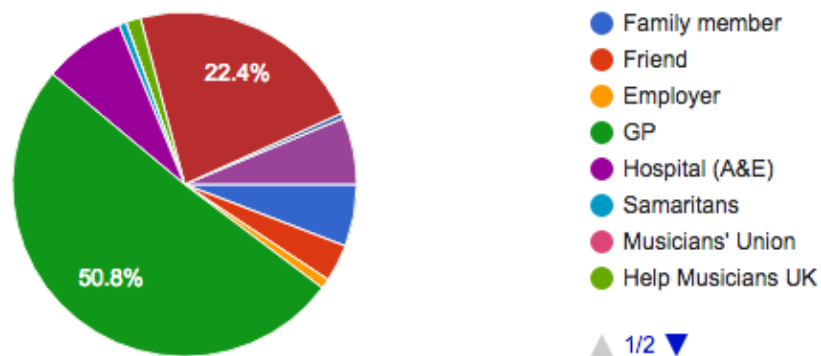


8a) If yes, did you get treatment? (If no please move on to section 3)

(862 responses)

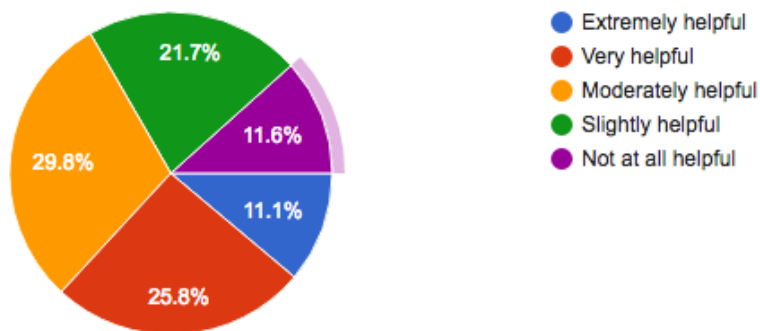


8b) If yes, where did you go for help? (429 responses)

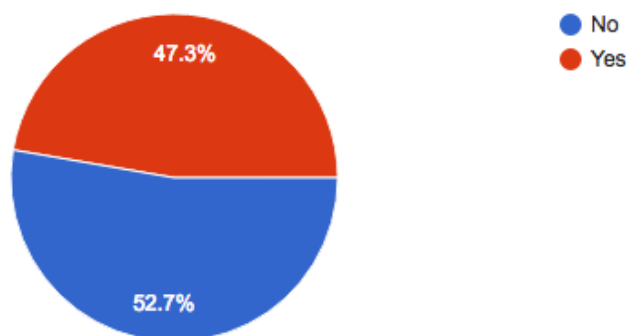


- Counselling service
- Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous
- Other...

8c) If yes, how helpful was advice/ treatment you were given? (396 responses)

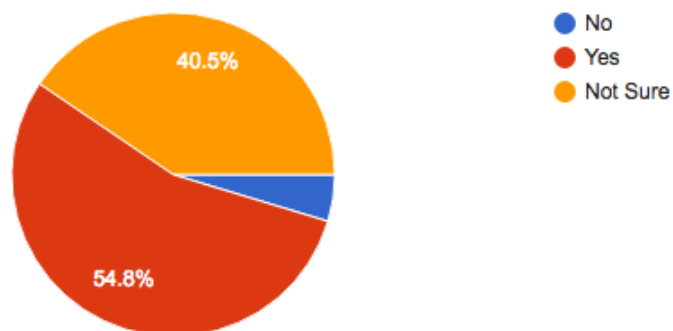


8d) If yes, did you find it easy to get help? (442 responses)



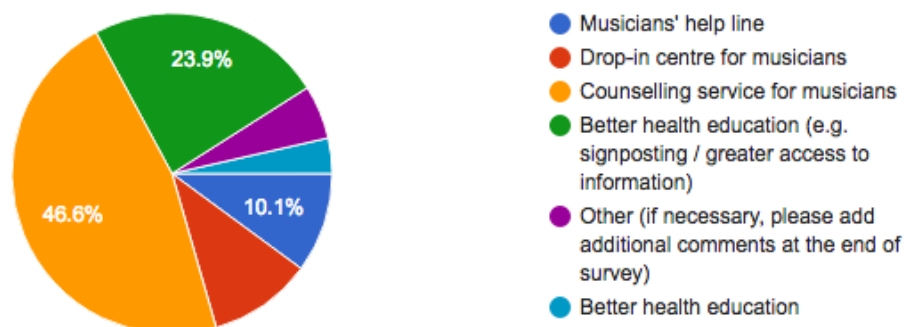
SECTION 3: HEALTH SUPPORT FOR MUSICIANS - 1) Do you feel there are gaps in the provision of services for musicians?

(2211 responses)

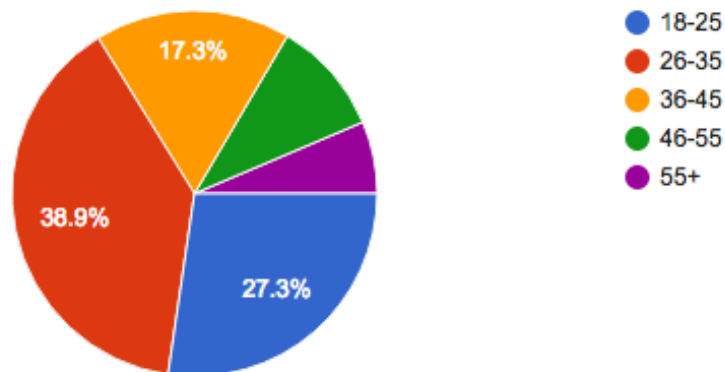


1a) If YES, what would you like to see? (if NO/ NOT SURE please move on to Section 4)

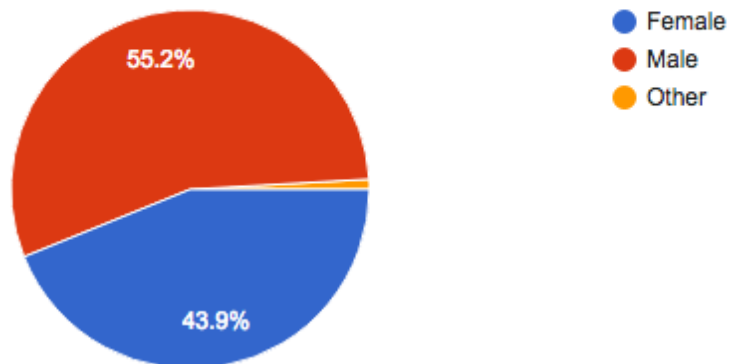
(1290 responses)



SECTION 4: ABOUT YOU - 1) Your Age (2211 responses)



SECTION 4: ABOUT YOU - 2) Gender (2211 responses)



SECTION 4: ABOUT YOU - 3) Location (where do you live?) (2211 responses)

