



Women Make Music

PRS Foundation

Women Make Music Report 2011- 2022



PRS
Foundation

Foreword

Women Make Music was set up to support women and gender expansive music creators while taking a proactive approach to addressing structural problems – raising awareness of the challenges underrepresented creators encounter in a music sector dominated by men, breaking down assumptions and stereotypes, and encouraging role models for future generations.

Since its launch in 2011, **we have invested almost £1.5m to transform the careers of hundreds of creators.** We're proud to have supported grantees who have gone on to forge successful long-term careers on their own terms, including multiple award-winners and other gems of the UK music scene. And this fund has been **one of our most competitive programmes statistically and musically.**

This report makes it clear that Women Make Music has played a vital role in shaping a fairer, stronger and better music sector for all genders. The results are truly remarkable.

Simply put, **targeted action works!** Women Make Music fast became a stamp of approval which has instilled a sense of belonging that is all too often missing in a precarious landscape for underrepresented talent.

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About Women Make Music

Women Make Music is a PRS Foundation initiative launched in 2011 in response to the low representation of women songwriters and composers in the UK. Data at the time showed that only 13% of PRS for Music members were women and 16% of applications for commissions received by PRS Foundation featured women composers and songwriters.

Taking a proactive approach to a structural problem, the Women Make Music fund was designed to attract women and gender expansive new music creators to apply for PRS Foundation funding; to raise the profile of successful artists; to raise awareness of the barriers and challenges that are encountered in the music industry; and to break down assumptions and stereotypes within the music industry by encouraging role models for future generations. The accessible funding pot supports the development of songwriters and composers of all backgrounds at different stages of their career.

The fund's timely support has played a vital role in supporting some of the most exciting music creators in the UK today including: Anna Meredith, ESKA, Emma-Jean Thackray, Carleen Anderson, Cassie Kinoshi, Let's Eat Grandma, Grove, Jessica Curry, Judith Weir, Kelly Lee Owens, Little Boots, Amahla, Marika Hackman, Poppy Ajudha, Rakhi Singh, ROE, YolanDa Brown, Sanity, Peggy Seeger, Sheila Maurice-Grey, Sinead O'Brien, Ruth Patterson, Ayanna Witter-Johnson, Isobel Anderson, Midori Komachi, Errollyn Wallen, Phoebe Green, BISHI, Kathryn Tickell, Hannah V, Bad Honey, Tawiah, The Anchoress, Liz Lawrence, Shingai, Bessie Turner, Bryde, Roxanne De Bastion, Hannah Kendall, Actor, Zara McFarlane, and Yazmin Lacey. You can see the full list on prsfoundation.com

As the report shows, our inclusive approach to gender equity has strengthened intersectional representation, and Women Make Music has **supported exceptional music creators from all backgrounds** across the UK, in all genres and at different career levels.

Women Make Music **has had a huge impact on PRS Foundation's approach to funding and talent development**. We reached our 50%+ gender representation target in 2018, and in 2022 63% of creator grantees were women, gender expansive or in mixed gender groups. And the fund's **influence on the wider music sector's approach to gender equity and justice** should not be underestimated.

But **while we celebrate progress**, extensive research conducted in the sector, and the experiences of the many applicants and grantees surveyed for this evaluation, shows that **the music industry is far from equitable**. The report presents a snapshot of the continued challenges to the full and successful participation of women and gender expansive music creators in the music sector.

Many barriers to gender (and wider) inclusivity remain and to that extent, **Women Make Music's work is not done**. The impact of our work would be greater if we could support more of the exceptionally talented women and gender expansive creators applying for funding. We're currently only able to fund 5-6% of applicants, and grantees want us to take a more holistic approach to the support available.

We need more help from the music industry to build on Women Make Music's success and to tackle remaining barriers. I encourage companies and key players to get behind us with financial support as well as expertise to help to fast-track careers, and to urgently address misogyny in music and break down systemic issues that exclude so many from surviving and thriving.

We are grateful to all those who completed our survey and took part in focus group discussions, including grantees and applicants we were unable to fund who gave wonderful

and constructively critical advice. And I want to thank partners, grantees, external advisors, Trustees and Foundation colleagues who have worked on Women Make Music over the years. Special thanks go out to Nicole McNeilly and Olivia Gable who have delivered this outstanding report.

And **thanks to PRS for Music** for sharing our belief in meaningful change through their donation which enables us to reach and support thousands of music creators each year.

I know when Vanessa Reed created this fund that she did so in the hope that one day targeted funds wouldn't be needed, so we wanted to make sure our impact report explored the question, "Is Women Make Music still needed?" While it may be disappointing that the simple answer is 'yes', the progress we have been making is hugely encouraging, and I am excited by the prospect of further consultation with women and gender expansive creators to evolve Women Make Music and the support we offer through the Foundation to ensure we include and empower underrepresented music creators for years to come.

Women Make Music is a source of huge pride for grantees and those involved in PRS Foundation's work, and we look forward to celebrating its impact for years to come!



Joe Frankland, CEO, PRS Foundation

Executive Summary

FINANCIALS AND DEMAND

Through Women Make Music, PRS Foundation has invested almost £1.5 million through 382 grants to women and gender expansive music creators.

With over 4,700 applications received and more than £21m requested since the first deadline in 2011, the charity has been able to support 7% of the total requested and just 8% of applicants, many of whom are successful on second or third attempt.

Annual demand for the fund has increased by 340% since it began in 2011, and between 2018-2022 - where music quality and quality of applications has remained consistently high - PRS Foundation could only fund around 6% of applicants. Women Make Music is therefore one of the most competitive funding opportunities within the PRS Foundation portfolio.

THE MUSIC CREATORS: WHO DID WOMEN MAKE MUSIC SUPPORT?

From 2020 - 2022 data, 93.3% of grantees identified as women, 2.8% are in all-women groups and almost 4% of grantees identified as gender expansive.

36% of grantees identified as LGBTQIA+. 54.5% of grantees identified as White and 45.5% of Women Make Music grantees have Black, Asian or other ethnically diverse heritage.

18% of grantees report having a long-term health condition and/or impairment that affects their day-to-day life, 6.25% identified as Deaf or disabled. Younger artists (under 35) apply more than older age groups and are slightly more likely to receive funding, suggesting further action is needed in this area. Early indications suggest that the fund is supporting a higher proportion of working class grantees than might be expected in the music industry.

The proportion of those being funded for the first time through Women Make Music has increased in the last few years, suggesting that the fund is reaching into networks of music creators who might not previously access funding from PRS Foundation or other funders.

Genre representation has shifted over the years and Classical music representation is now in line with other PRS Foundation music creator programmes (at 15% of grants), with the most-funded genres in Women Make Music now being Alternative, Indie and Rock music (16.9%) closely followed by Hip-Hop/Rap, R&B/Soul, Afrobeats, Grime and Drill (16.4%).

A note from PRS Foundation: gender equity focus improves intersectional inclusivity

PRS Foundation analysed the intersectionality of programmes in 2021 and found that where there is a focus on gender equity, other intersectional barriers appear to be broken down too. In 2021, 42% of Women Make Music grantees and 45% of grantees in all gender equity focussed programmes (e.g. Keychange, ReBalance, The Oram Awards) identify as Black, Asian and ethnically diverse. This compares to 38% of grantees to non-gender equity and non-racial equity focussed programmes. We have found that ethnically diverse representation is 4%-7% higher when gender equity is targeted.



“When we launched Women Make Music in 2011, I defined “success” as the moment when this fund would no longer be needed. In an industry that continues to be run by men, this evaluation confirms that there is still much progress to be made. Until there is more evidence of widespread structural and cultural change led by those who currently hold the most power, targeted initiatives like Women Make Music are an essential form of empowerment and endorsement for women and gender expansive creators.

I am extremely grateful to Joe Frankland and everyone at PRS Foundation for continuing to champion this fund and for this detailed analysis of the obstacles and opportunities ahead. I hope other industry leaders will acknowledge the importance of this work by helping to extend the fund's future reach as part of their investment in talent of all backgrounds.”

Vanessa Reed

A SHORT GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Cis male or female	Cis is used to refer to people whose gender identity corresponds to their sex assigned at birth
Gender expansive	An inclusive term used to describe someone with a more flexible gender identity than might be associated with a typical gender binary. This might include those who identify as non-binary, transgender, gender fluid, gender queer, agender and gender non-conforming.
Intersectionality	The consideration of the interconnected nature of social inequalities that affect a person’s lived experience, for example, relating to gender, ethnic background, health and disabilities, location, class and socio-economic background, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities, work status, and more
LGBTQIA+	An abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, and more
Women and gender expansive music creators	Women, women-identifying and other gender expansive people (aka underrepresented and marginalised genders in a music sector which is dominated by Cis-men)

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT FOR GRANTEES?

From our survey of Women Make Music-funded grantees from 2017 - 2022, we see a significant increase¹ in **creative development** (94%), **confidence and empowerment** (94%) and **business skills** (69%).

We classify **creative development** in two ways. First, relating to how music is created, where inspiration, collaboration, writing styles, etc, are key. Secondly, in how music is orchestrated, arranged, produced and recorded. Many report the value of the **opportunity to improve their skills as a producer**, countering the existing male dominance in this area. This leads to being more empowered and independent in steering their own creative direction going forward.

Non-creative skills development was an important outcome for many grantees, which is no surprise considering the multifaceted portfolio of skills musicians are increasingly expected to have if they want to succeed and remain independent. At the same time, **44% of grantees used the funding to develop the team or infrastructure around them and their music**. Funding allowed grantees to collaborate with other musicians and creatives, for example, going from a solo performer to working with a group of musicians, and supported interdisciplinary collaboration, too.

44% of grantees mentioned the value of the award in terms of it being from PRS Foundation or PRS for Music. This is connected to a feeling of having been given a stamp of approval, of having their artistry and their ideas validated by an important sector body, and the value that this confidence affords.

It is likely, then, that as a result of increased confidence, creative development and new skills, we see an increase¹ in factors that **contribute to their longer-term career sustainability**, including securing new bookings (54%) and attracting new commissions (54%).

Furthermore, **46% of grantees directly attribute an increase in their income to Women Make Music funding**. Where this is the case, we see a **median income increase of 53%**².

Finally, it was refreshing to see that **12% of grantees felt encouraged or able to raise awareness of or address music industry gender barriers**, suggesting that the fund harnesses, creates or strengthens music creators' desire to make positive industry change, as well as influencing others around them through a ripple effect.

WHERE DO WE SEE THE IMPACT?

The distribution of PRS Foundation's funding through Women Make Music 2017-2022 aligns roughly with census data and **overall national distribution has improved** when compared with the period 2011-2016. Despite the dominance of the music industry in London, the data show us that half of London-based grantees came from other areas in the UK and **77% of Women Make Music projects reach audiences internationally and across the UK**. Improving support for the national new music ecosystem outside of London remains important, particularly in terms of improving access and opportunities for women and gender expansive music creators and those of lower socio-economic backgrounds who might feel or be obliged to move to London to succeed in their music careers.

¹ Reporting that they agree or strongly agree to an increase in terms of this outcome.

² Of our sample of respondents to a survey of grantees 2017-2022, 16 (30% of the respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the grant contributed to a direct increase in income and gave figures that meant that we could estimate the increase in income. We calculated the percentage income for each respondent, then calculated the average (resulting in a figure of 207% as a result of differing ranges of incomes being shared) and a median increase (53%).



Chagall - supported in 2018

WHY IS WOMEN MAKE MUSIC STILL IMPORTANT?

The sector is still biased against women and gender expansive music creators. In some cases, evidence suggests that the situation has worsened. There has been some progress in the last few years, but **there is still work to do.**

98% of Women Make Music grantees agree that the fund is still needed and 50% were motivated to apply because of the targeted nature of the fund.

It's about more than just funding. Existing research and the findings of this evaluation show why proactive and targeted solutions for change, like Women Make Music, are needed to give confidence to women and gender expansive music creators and to increase their visibility in an otherwise cis male-dominated sector.

83% of activity could not have taken place without Women Make Music funding.

The music industry is a risky business (Keychange, 2021) and funds like Women Make Music are key to creating and demanding change in a sector that would otherwise - from the top-down - change very slowly. While the **responsibility lies on the industry to lead structural and cultural change**, targeted funds afford women and other underrepresented genders the confidence to make work on their own terms, and empower them to create change in the sector and for themselves from the bottom up.

Progress has been made in some respects. UK Music (2022) reports that female participation in the music industry has increased. Some, though not all, of the biggest music industry employers report a decreasing gender pay gap (Paine, 2022). Initiatives such as Keychange have brought the problem of the lack of equality in music programming to a wide and international audience. There has been an increase in women members of the Music Producers Guild (Simpson/PRS for Music, 2021).

Yet a report by the Incorporated Society of Musicians (Williams and Bain, 2022) finds that no progress has been made since the first edition of their research four years earlier. All Things Equal (2022) finds no signs of change in the barriers that restrict routes into the industry and working practices. Similarly, in the Keychange survey (2021), less than half of women respondents perceived an improvement in equal opportunities in the last five years. The survey of PRS Foundation's advisors also agreed that **Women Make Music is not done yet.**

THERE IS NO EQUAL PLAYING FIELD IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

The intersectional approach of this evaluation, research conducted by others and PRS Foundation's own data collection shed more light on the state of the industry and the other characteristics that intersect with gender that compound barriers to full and successful participation. We list key challenges below and explore these more in the full report.

Only one in seven women internationally believe that the industry offers men and women equal opportunities

(Keychange, 2021)

13% of festival headliners in 2022 were female

(Mansfield et al./BBC, 2022)

Women are underrepresented in the top 100 songs of all genres, ranging from 42% in pop music to only 4% in electronic music

(Hamilton/Deezer, 2021)

More women than men in the performing arts are likely to report turning down work because of childcare responsibilities

(McDowall et al./PiPA, 2019)

43% of Black women music creators felt that they have to change their appearance to fit into the music industry

(BLiM, 2021c)

There are documented biases in music recommendation engines that discriminate against women

(Ferraro et al, 2021)

Black women music creators earn 25% less than their white music creator peers

(Black Lives in Music, 2021c)

Women are increasingly represented in the sector but are leaving the sector in their mid-forties

(UK Music, 2022)

Female artists were more likely to experience discrimination if they had a disability

(Williams and Bain/ISM, 2022)

The cost of living, or rather, 'cost of working' crisis is already negatively impacting 91% of musicians

(Help Musicians, 2022)

Musicians are one of the most elite occupations with 67% coming from privileged backgrounds

(Carey et al., 2021)

Over 90% of women respondents to a survey by the Music Producers Guild felt discriminated against because of sex or gender

(Music Producers' Guild, 2022)



Ten challenges to gender inclusivity in the music industry

1. Structural cis male-dominance within the music industry
2. Discrimination, harassment and unconscious bias
3. Racial discrimination and other intersectional barriers
4. Health, disability, neurodivergence and mental health challenges
5. Underrepresentation, including in non-performer roles
6. Systemic barriers for those with parental and caring responsibilities
7. Ageism
8. Making a professional career as an independent artist
9. Socio-economic background and class
10. A culture of working or performing for free, and the gender pay gap

Women Make Music can't address every barrier to full and successful participation in the music industry. Yet this evaluation shows that the fund is helping to address the most problematic and often invisible barriers to success - confidence and strategies to succeed as an independent artist in an otherwise biased industry. This is particularly important in light of the slow pace of structural change.

In partnership with key sector players, PRS Foundation can and must work to expand the availability of targeted funding for women and gender expansive music creators. By doing so, they will help those least represented in the sector not only succeed, but thrive.



Women Make Music

PRS Foundation

2011 – 2022



£1.46m

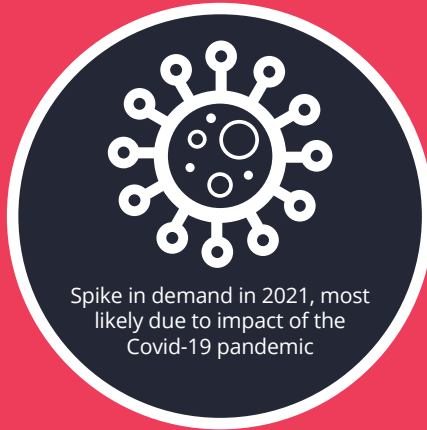
invested through
Women Make Music

£21m

of funding requested through Women Make Music
(proving the demand for targeted support)



increase in demand



Spike in demand in 2021, most likely due to impact of the Covid-19 pandemic



4,706

Total applications received



Over one in five

(22%) of funded projects had an international element



London

50%

Overall 50% of all grantees are based outside London



Only 8.1%

(382) applications could be funded



6%

Between 2018 - 2022, only around 6% of applications could be funded

85.9%

of Women Make Music grantees were from England and the remainder from Scotland (6%), Wales (4%) and Northern Ireland (4%)



6%

4%

4%

85.9%



59%

of funded projects had international reach and 34% had a UK-wide or national reach

Diversity Of Women Make Music Grantees 2020 - 2022

Breaking down intersectional barriers



- 54.5% of grantees identified as White including 39% White British
- 26.7% were Black or with Mixed Heritage including Black
- 9.9% were Asian or with Mixed Heritage including Asian
- 5% identified as Mixed Heritage (with no further detail given)
- 4% stated they belong to another ethnic group



- 93.3% of grantees identified as women
- 2.8% were in all-women groups
- 1.9% identified as gender queer
- 1% as gender fluid
- 1% as non-binary



- 18% of grantees reported having a long-term health condition and/or impairment that affects their day-to-day life
- 6.25% identifying as Deaf or disabled"



- 36% of grantees identified as LGBTQIA+

From The Women Make Music Grantees Surveyed



agree that the fund is still needed



were motivated to apply because of the targeted nature of the fund



SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS

- Where the question was applicable, 83% of grantees attended State-run or State-funded schools

Women Make Music grantees agreed the support increased:



94%

Creative Development



94%

Confidence and Empowerment

Leading to:

- Belief in own creative skills and product
- Feeling empowered to continue a career in a challenging industry
- Reduced feelings of imposter syndrome



69%

Business Skills



54%

Securing New Bookings



54%

Attracting New Commissions



53%

Median increase in income as a direct result of Women Make Music support



Awards and Industry Recognition

Out of 382 grantees, nominations and awards include:

- 15 British Composer Awards
- 9 Jazz FM Awards
- 5 Mercury Prize Album of the Year nominations
- 5 Paul Hamlyn Foundation Awards
- 2 Royal Philharmonic Society Award
- An Ivor Novello Composer Award
- A Welsh Music Prize and Scottish Album of the Year Award
- Scotsman 'Fringe First' award
- One piece funded by Women Make Music has been added to the music curriculum

Key Recommendations For Women Make Music

ONE. CONTINUE, ADAPT AND EXPAND THE WOMEN MAKE MUSIC FUND

Women Make Music should continue and expand as a targeted fund acknowledging the many challenges that are still encountered on a regular basis and reinforces the message that these barriers must still be addressed. Though PRS Foundation's other funds are now gender balanced, **removing or downsizing the fund might suggest that the 'problem' is solved.** This is quite clearly not the case. As a key sector voice and funder, this would be a detrimental move to any progress that has been achieved, particularly in light of significant and increasing demand.

There are a number of key improvements that could enhance the impact of the fund and address the barriers that have worsened due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes: **embedding mentoring and coaching; adjusting and improving support for parents/carers, music creators with disabilities or health issues, and those with low incomes; and increasing promotional and showcasing opportunities.**

Women Make Music **could also be restructured into a two-tier fund**, introducing, for example, ring fenced support of up to £1,000 for early career applicants who may otherwise struggle to stand out from more established creators.

To adapt and expand the fund, **PRS Foundation requires increased support from partners in the music industry and beyond.**

TWO. CONSULT FURTHER WITH GENDER EXPANSIVE CREATORS AND STAKEHOLDERS

While current practices are having a good result in terms of the inclusivity of the fund (as demonstrated above), **more consultation is needed to ensure that the fund best addresses the needs of gender expansive communities.** PRS Foundation has already committed to this, to ensure that future support for gender expansive communities is inclusive, welcoming and effective at addressing barriers. Further consultation directly with the stakeholders and communities in question is particularly important considering the lack of research in this area.

THREE. CONTINUE TO BE A POWERFUL SECTOR VOICE ON GENDER EQUITY AND CATALYSE BETTER REPRESENTATION IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

It is imperative that PRS Foundation remains a powerful sector voice fighting for more equity and representation in the music industry. Not only must it lead by example and expand Women Make Music to fund those who need the most support to succeed, it should also **convene and partner with others to address the sector's most problematic structural challenges, including mindsets towards gender equity.**



Camilla George - supported in 2017

The Impact Of Women Make Music

REACH AND INCLUSIVITY

We reflect here on the key successes of Women Make Music in terms of who it reached and where, and what this might mean when compared to what we know about the wider sector.

Celebrating and welcoming gender diversity

Women Make Music is one of PRS Foundation's most popular funding schemes. Since launching the fund, PRS Foundation has seen the number of women and gender minorities benefitting from all of its programmes steadily increase and become **balanced since 2018**. In 2021, **62.7% of music creator grantees supported in all of PRS Foundation's funding were women solo creators (47.5%), mixed gender groups (9.5%) or gender expansive (5.7%)**, 37.3% of PRS Foundation grantees overall were male solo creators or in all-male groups.

Data collection practices relating to gender have been updated to be as inclusive as possible. Between 2020 - 2022, since improvements were put into place, PRS Foundation calculates that 93.3% of grantees identified as women and 2.8% are in all-women groups. Of gender expansive music creators, 1.9% identified as gender queer, 1% as gender fluid and 1% as non-binary. In total, **almost 4% of all Women Make Music grantees identify as gender expansive**.

While this suggests that the funding is attracting gender expansive music creators, we see that the title 'Women Make Music' continues to attract more women-identifying applicants and grantees. With programmes like Keychange increasingly attracting and supporting more applicants who identify as gender expansive (over 9% of Year 3 Keychange participants are gender expansive), PRS Foundation should address this issue for underrepresented creators who do not feel they identify with the 'women' ¹ element of the fund's brand – as explored in the conclusions.

Tackling discrimination based on sexual orientation

From 2020 - 2022, **36% of Women Make Music grantees identified as LGBTQIA+**.

Addressing industry inequalities in ethnic diversity and race ²

The data collected by PRS Foundation shows that **more music creators from an ethnically diverse background are being funded through Women Make Music**, compared to earlier years in the programme. Since data collection practices were improved in 2020, we see that **54.5% of Women Make Music grantees were White** (39% White British); **26.7% identified as Black or with Mixed Heritage including Black**; **9.9% identified as Asian or with Mixed Heritage including Asian**; and just over **5% identified as having mixed heritage (where details on heritage were not given)**. Around **4% identified according to another ethnic group**.

Supporting more disabled music creators

PRS Foundation has been monitoring disability and access needs since 2017, adjusting the questions asked in forms from 2020 onwards in consultation with Attitude is Everything and specialist Talent Development Partners. In 2021-2022 **18% of grantees report having a long-term health condition and/or impairment that affects their day-to-day life** with 6.25% identifying as Deaf or disabled.

Early signs of supporting those from lower socio-economic backgrounds

Women Make Music is supporting a high proportion of music creators from lower socio-economic backgrounds compared to representation within the wider music sector or creative industries. Since 2020, PRS Foundation has asked four questions in its application forms relating to socio-economic background based on good practice established by the Weston Jerwood Creative Bursary class-related report recommendations.

From the early data collected and of those able to answer the question ³, **83% of grantees attended either non-selective or selective State-run or funded schools (58% and 25% respectively)**. This is a higher proportion than we might expect if we look at the wider research. For example, Carey et al. (2021) suggest that musicians are one of the most elite professional groups (with 67% coming from privileged backgrounds) and 37% of respondents identify as working class in the UK Music diversity survey (2022). The Jerwood Arts Toolkit on Socio-Economic Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts states that 18% of those working in music are working class (Jerwood Arts, 2019).

Putting funding directly into the pockets of music creators

Between 2011-2014, organisations were able to apply to Women Make Music to support music creators. Roughly 50% of applicants and 60-70% of those funded were organisations at that time. **From 2015, only music creators could apply**, and organisations were encouraged to apply to PRS Foundation's Open Fund, with the double benefit of tackling gender inequity through open project funding. Updating the criteria has helped PRS Foundation put more money directly into the pockets of music creators, with 85% of grants between 2011 - 2022, and 100% since 2015, being awarded to music creators directly.

Furthermore, Women Make Music, is increasingly an entry point into the 'funding world', so to speak, as **the proportion of those being funded for the first time through Women Make Music has increased in the last few years (72.5% average across 2017 - 2022)**. This will increase further if smaller amounts of funding were available to those with less of a track record in the industry.

Increasing the diversity of music genres supported

Classical music has been the dominant genre in Women Make Music, though this has changed over the years. Between 2011-2016, during which time organisations were eligible to apply to the fund, 33% of grantees applied for projects involving Classical music. Since the fund criteria was updated to focus on music creators, classical music levelled out to 15%, in line with other PRS Foundation music creator schemes. When we look at the data from 2017 - 2022, Alternative, Indie and Rock genres are now the most funded genre group (16.9%) by a small margin, followed closely by Black Music genres (Hip-Hop/Rap, R&B/Soul, Afrobeats, Grime and Drill) (16.4%).



"I think that the social background of creators is as important as gender. I come from a state-educated background in a quite rough school and definitely did not have the opportunities early on that musicians in private schools had, or even those whose state schools had a musical specialism or who went to junior conservatoire on a Saturday. That has an effect on your confidence."

Women Make Music grantee

¹ Keychange (no date) reports that in Year Three of the programme 9.7% of applicants and 9.5% of those selected identify as gender expansive.

² The way that PRS Foundation has monitored race has evolved since the launch of the POWER UP initiative to create a fairer, more equitable music industry for black music creators and industry professionals and to support innovative and exciting Black talent.

³ For example, some grantees do not come from the UK so can not answer this question.

Nurturing a national ecosystem of new music

The distribution of Women Make Music funding across the four UK regions has improved in the last four years of the programme. While 14% of funding was allocated to Scotland (6.3%), Wales (4.2%) and Northern Ireland (3.7%) between 2011-2022, this distribution was higher between 2017-2022 at 16.5% overall. This means that **Women Make Music funding is almost in line with 2021 census estimates** ¹, though Scotland is slightly underrepresented. Overall, PRS Foundation has seen a steady improvement in nations and regions representation since 2017, which coincides with the growth of their Talent Development Partner network and interventions including the PPL Momentum Accelerator programme.

Nonetheless, the talent drain to London is still visible and the funding allocation to London should still be in review.

SNAPSHOT: PRS FOUNDATION DATA COLLECTION

Over time, and across all its funds, PRS Foundation has been improving the collecting, reporting and use of data relating to those applying for and receiving funding. Much of the data improvements made relate to data on diversity, commonly known in the UK context as protected characteristics ².

PRS Foundation collects data for monitoring purposes and to help ensure the representativeness of its funding. The type of data collected, an indication of how it has been improved over time, and what it is used for, is outlined below.

Data used to balance the distribution of funding ³

- Regional and national location
- Genre ⁴
- Gender identity ⁵
- Since 2017, ethnicity and race

Data used for monitoring purposes only

- Age
- Region/nation of origin
- Since 2017, disability and access needs ⁶
- Since 2020, sexual orientation
- Since 2020, socio-economic data ⁷

AREAS TO WORK ON

Address the talent and diversity drain, especially for gender expansive music creators

Demand for Women Make Music from London-based music creators remains strong, and 50% of grantees come from London. We know that “place matters when it comes to socio-economic diversity” and that it has implications on the diversity of the creative workforce (Carey et al., 2021). The talent drain to London is visible in the data, which shows that only 27% of grantees based in London are originally from London.

Be there for older music creators

Younger creators are slightly more likely to receive funding through Women Make Music, when comparing those applying with those funded through the programme. Overall, the largest group funded were those in the age group of 25 - 34 (55%), though they make up just under half of applicants (49%). 14% of those funded were in the 34 - 45 category and 6% were aged 45 and older, echoing broader trends noted in the UK Music diversity report (2022). Mixed age groups accounted for 7% of funded projects.



OUTCOMES FOR GRANTEES

Here we share what we observed in the data collected for this evaluation, drawing from evaluation data submitted by grantees, focus group findings and a survey of grantees. We see key themes around confidence, creative and skills development, a sense of community and activism, and indicators of longer-term sustainable careers.

DEVELOPING CREATIVE PRACTICE

- **94% of grantees reported that the funding supported their creative development**
- We classify creative development in two ways. First, relating to how music is created, where inspiration, collaboration, writing styles, etc, are key. Secondly, in how music is orchestrated, arranged, produced and recorded
- In both areas of creative development, funding provided opportunities to:
 - Experiment with new styles, explore new ways of writing and orchestrating music, and pursue and refine their own musical style and techniques
 - Develop as a musician in collaboration with other musicians and music professionals
 - Strengthen how to share and communicate a creative vision, and when to say 'no' when something doesn't sound right (also linked with confidence)
 - Develop creative skills like mixing, home recording and producing, using music production software
 - Develop skills that led to other sustainable, music-related career opportunities, like teaching, leading a band or group, or coaching others
 - Deliver higher quality outputs than before, and use skills gained to continue to deliver higher quality outputs (e.g. demos)
- Many report the value of the opportunity to develop or improve their skills as a producer (countering the existing male dominance, see Hernandez et al., 2022). This leads to feeling more empowered, confident and independent in steering their own creative direction. There is also an indication that this leads to longer-term career sustainability in terms of being able to produce their own work more easily, on their own terms and more affordably in future

CONFIDENCE AND EMPOWERMENT

- **94% of grantees reported that the funding increased their confidence**
- Increased confidence led to:
 - Belief in own creative skills and product
 - Feeling empowered to continue a career in a challenging industry
 - Reduced feelings of imposter syndrome
- Funding allowed music creators to build their musical career 'on their own terms' without compromising their creative vision and sound
- Funding gave songwriters and composers time to create, and this investment in their time increased their confidence
- Grantees shared that the fund enabled them to create higher quality outputs that they are proud of and that act as a 'calling card' or milestones in their career

LEGITIMACY AND ENDORSEMENT

- **44% of grantees mentioned the value of the award in terms of it being from PRS Foundation or PRS for Music**⁸. This is connected to a feeling of having been given a ‘rubber stamp’, of having their artistry and their ideas validated by an important sector body. For many this was a motivation to apply. **The legitimacy that the funding awards** was mentioned as valuable in combination with the financial award, particularly in terms of the confidence boost this gave



It has given me the confidence to believe in my art and believe that it's valuable and worthy. And when organisations like PRS Foundation support that, again, it gives you that confidence. And then with that, your whole artistry grows.

Women Make Music grantee

STRENGTHENING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY SKILLS

- **69% of grantees report improved business skills**
- Non-creative skills development was an important outcome for many grantees, which is no surprise considering the multifaceted portfolio of skills musicians are increasingly expected to have if they want to remain independent
- Skills gained include:
 - PR, promotion, social media and marketing
 - Business communication, building healthy relationships, addressing toxic relationships
 - Time management, working to deadline, scheduling rehearsals
 - Coordination and planning, logistics (e.g. touring, travel, arranging recording or rehearsal sessions) and event management
 - Budgeting, fundraising and applying for funding
 - Knowledge about contracts and insurance

GROWING A TEAM AND PROMOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT

- 44% of grantees used the funding to **bolster the team or infrastructure around them and their music**
- This included support for childcare
- Key external support included specialists in PR, promotion and marketing who helped reach key media like newspapers and streaming services. Grantees referenced the importance of successful publicity and marketing, particularly around radio play and the BBC (most frequently referenced) and written reviews (online or in magazines)

Network growth and collaboration

- Funding allowed grantees to collaborate with other musicians and creatives, for example, going from a solo performer to working with a group of musicians
- Collaboration was musical but also interdisciplinary, inspiring new ways of making and performing music. Grantees reported collaborations working with community groups, refugees and asylum seekers, ethnic minority groups, sports groups and athletes, academics, other creative specialisms e.g. dance and staging, and programmers
- There was a perception that Women Make Music has created a community, despite the fund not having the resource or capacity to undertake action to create a formal community that meets, exchanges contacts, initiates collaborations and shares experiences

COMMUNITY, CHANGE AND ACTIVISM

- **57% of applicants applied due to the targeted nature of the fund**
- 27% applied having seen or been in contact with other grantees, or having been encouraged by the sense of community created through the fund yet grantees and previous applicants were keen for more connection to and information on previous grantees, who have been in their position and had experienced success.
- For many, a Women Make Music award was an opportunity to 'join the club' and be promoted as a Women Make Music grantee
- There was a perception of 'moral' support, encouragement and empowerment attached to the funding, which some considered strengthened the impact of the financial support
- In open text responses, 12% of grantees felt encouraged or able to raise awareness of or address music industry gender barriers, suggesting that the fund harnesses, creates or strengthens music creators' desire to make positive industry change



This project has encouraged the male musicians I work with to rethink their methods and [they] are [now] making space for women in the industry.

Women Make Music grantee

¹ 2021 census estimates calculated as follows: England - 84% of the total UK population, Scotland - 8%, Wales - 5%, Northern Ireland - 3%. See <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>

² The term protected characteristics relates to the types of discrimination that someone might face <https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights>

³ Where it is not already part of the fund criteria

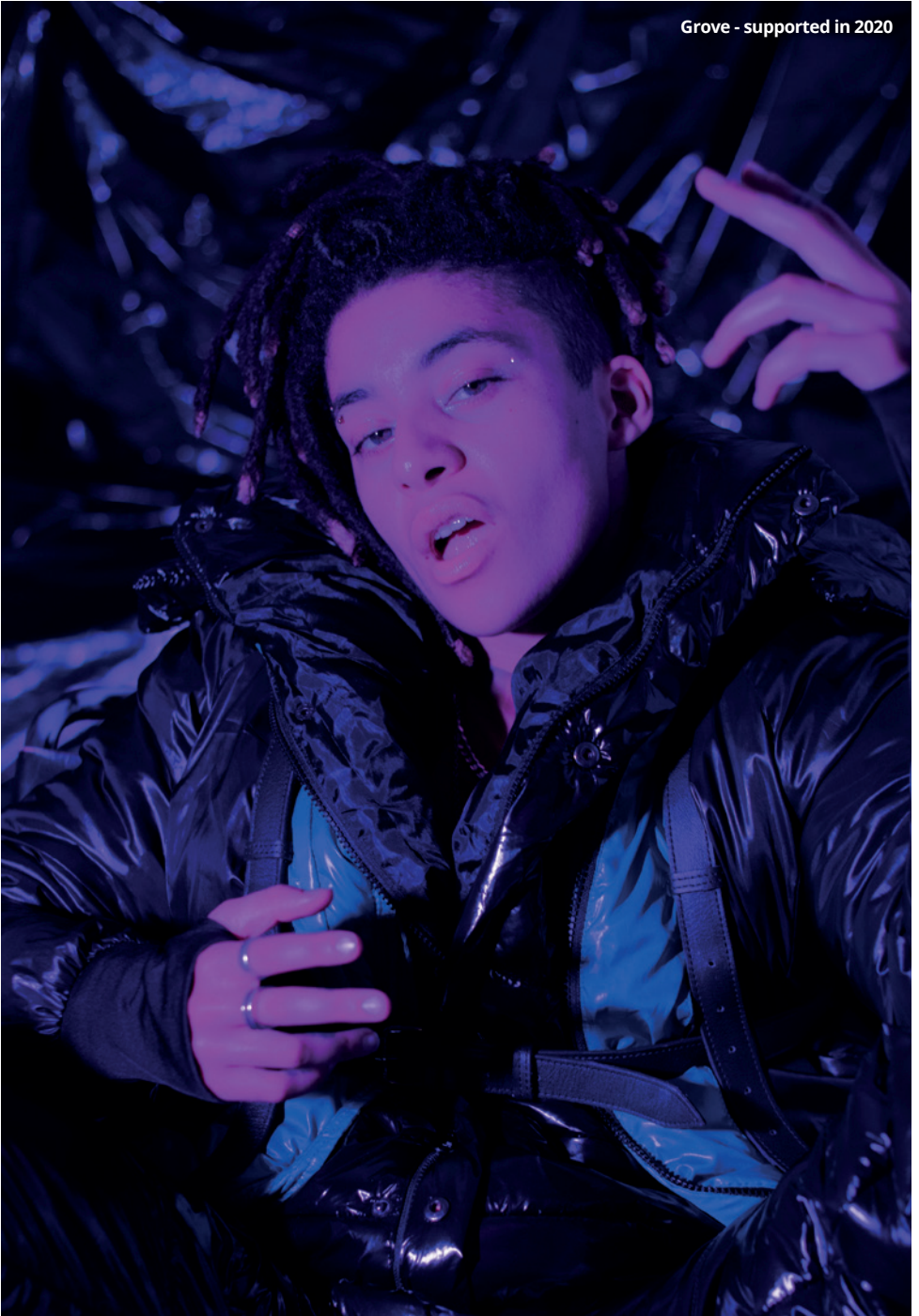
⁴ Genre lists have been updated over time

⁵ PRS Foundation originally captured only female/male responses. This category expanded between 2011-2019 to include 'other'. Since 2020, PRS Foundation has implemented better gender identity practice through all schemes, encouraging applicants to select from a longer list of gender identities which are no longer simply based on biological sex

⁶ Questions were updated in 2020 in consultation with Attitude is Everything and specialist Talent Development Partners

⁷ Based on good practice established by the Weston Jerwood Creative Bursary class-related report recommendations

⁸ Some grantees referred to PRS for Music instead of the Foundation, suggesting that they see the Foundation as an extension of PRS for Music, or as one and the same thing, rather than seeing PRS Foundation as an independent body. Either way, the brand of PRS adds value.



RECOGNITION, NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND SUSTAINABLE CAREERS

- **46% of grantees attribute a direct increase in their income to Women Make Music.** Many respondents (38%) selected the neutral option (do not agree nor disagree). This might reflect the 40% of grantees that explicitly mentioned the impact of the pandemic on their careers and incomes, as well as the challenge of attributing causality to income increase when there may be multiple factors ¹
- Of those who report that Women Make Music funded contributed directly to an increase in their income, **income increased by a median of 53%**
- 54% of grantees reported that funding led to new commissions and the same amount reported that funding helped to secure new bookings, all which are likely to contribute to an increase in income and long-term career sustainability
- Women Make Music-funded music was added to key playlists by music streaming platforms and featured and supported by important radio channels
- Funding created the conditions for grantees to:
 - Break into **new international markets**
 - Sign **publishing, record and sync deals**
 - **Harness support** from other key sector development bodies, e.g. English Folk Expo, UK Arts Councils, Help Musicians etc
 - Secure **repeat performances of commissions**, including international premieres
- For some, being awarded funding creates career and creative momentum to continue to create and release music without the need for further funding
- Other grantees went on to secure further PRS Foundation funding, including through Momentum (18 grantees), The Composers' Fund (16 grantees), New Music Biennial commissions (9 grantees), POWER UP (6 grantees) and Hitmaker (1 grantee)

¹ Unlike other evaluations, we also asked grantees about direct influence of the grant on any income increase. See the methodology in the complete version of the report on [prsfoundation.com](https://www.prsfoundation.com) for more information.



IS WOMEN MAKE MUSIC STILL NEEDED?

Ten years after its launch, we ask the question - is Women Make Music still needed? To answer this, we need to consider both the views of stakeholders and wider research on the current state of play and the position of women and gender minorities in the music industry.

Even after years of focused work on bridging the gap in gender inclusivity and the gap that has been caused, we are still very much experiencing a complete imbalance in the industry.

Women Make Music Grantee

THE SHORT ANSWER: **YES**

- **100% of PRS Foundation Talent Development Partners agree that Women Make Music is still needed**, as did:
- **98% of Women Make Music grantees**
- **95% of PRS Foundation advisors**
- **90% of industry peers**
- **89% of past applicants who were not successful**

There is strong agreement that the **fund is still needed**. But why? Below we explore in more detail why and what has, or hasn't, changed.



WHY IS WOMEN MAKE MUSIC, AND MORE ADVOCACY AND ACTION FOR GENDER EQUITY, STILL NEEDED?

Progress has been made in some respects. UK Music (2022) reports that female participation in the music industry has increased. Some, though not all, of the biggest music industry employers report a decreasing gender pay gap (Paine, 2022). Initiatives such as Keychange have brought the problem of the lack of equality in music programming to a wide and international audience. There has been an increase in women members of the Music Producers Guild (Simpson/PRS for Music, 2021).

Yet a report by the Incorporated Society of Musicians (Williams and Bain, 2022) finds that no progress has been made since the first edition of their research four years earlier. All Things Equal (2022) finds no signs of change in the barriers that restrict routes into the industry and working practices. Similarly, in the Keychange survey (2021), less than half of women respondents perceived an improvement in equal opportunities in the last five years. The survey of PRS Foundation's advisors also agreed that **Women Make Music is not done yet**.

We analysed the data collected for this evaluation and conducted a rapid review of sector research to look for indications of existing or new barriers to participation and success in the music industry by women or gender expansive artists. It is important to look at this with an intersectional lens. This means that we were looking for challenges relating to gender (e.g. sexual harassment) but also other intersecting characteristics which can often compound the barriers faced.


A note on the research relating to gender expansive music creators

Overall, we saw less research into the experiences of gender expansive music creators, or where this was part of the research, small sample sizes meant that it was sometimes difficult for authors to report on it. For example, Carers UK (2022) report a small sample size relating to experiences of trans carers during the pandemic. The UK Music Diversity Report (2022) reports that 1.2% of the sample identified as non-binary. However, programmes such as Keychange (2017-2023) are attracting more diverse applicants and participants. The most recent Keychange cohort, for example, consists of 90.5% women and 9.5% gender expansive music creators (2023). Research emerging from these cohorts will prove important in addressing barriers to full and successful participation in the music industry. Other important sector initiatives like All Things Equal (2022) call for more research into 'the live music scene and the underrepresentation of people of marginalised genders of all backgrounds'. The expanded programme of consultation recommended by this report will be important in this regard.



The fund helps encourage emerging women and gender expansive music creatives through additional opportunities - the idea of that, to counter awareness of increased career progression barriers, makes a significant difference. Probably without the fund there would still be a similar number of women and gender expansive music creatives trying to build a career, but the pressures to put aside their ambitions and concentrate on better paid work or wider life responsibilities wouldn't have that 'vote of confidence' to counter them that receiving a grant represents.

PRS Foundation advisor

A professional portrait of Tonia Ko, a woman with long, straight black hair, looking slightly to the left. She is wearing a dark blue and maroon ribbed top. The background is a plain, light-colored wall with soft shadows cast behind her.

Tonia Ko - supported in 2022

Ten Challenges To Gender Inclusivity In The Music Industry

Below we share an overview of ten of the most prominent themes around barriers to gender inclusivity. These are not the only barriers and there is some overlap between them, as to be expected with lived experience. Nonetheless, they help to outline the many intersecting challenges that women and gender expansive music creators experience. At the end of this section, we share short insights into what the impact of Covid-19 has been on Women Make Music grantees.

1. Structural male-dominance or male-focus of the music industry

Focus: structural issues in the sector relating to representation and participation.

- From the evaluation data, we see that:
 - The increased inclusion of woman and non-binary artists can still be perceived as box-ticking, rather than genuine change, suggesting more action is needed
 - Though a small fund, **47% of past applicants** to Women Make Music **suggest that without Women Make Music the music industry would be even more male-dominated**, male-focussed or less welcoming to women
- There is still no level playing field in the music industry - only one in seven women internationally believe that the industry offers men and women equal opportunities (Keychange, 2021) and the lack of access to male-dominated industry resources is seen as one of the key challenges to women music creators (Kahlert et al./Be the Change, 2021)
- 80% of respondents believe that it is harder to get recognition as a female artist than as a male artist (Kahlert et al./Be the change, 2021)
- Female artists are underrepresented in the top 100 songs of all genres, ranging from 42% in pop music to only 4% in electronic music (Hamilton/Deezer, 2021)
- Women solo artists represent only 14.6% of the total artists represented by UK music publishers (Bain/UK Music, 2019)
- Only 7.7% of surveyed international classical programming in 2021/2022 was written by women, of which 5.5% were living composers. Of the total 7.7% written by women composers, 5.5% was written by white women (di Laccio et al./Donne Foundation, 2022). In the same survey, it was found that less than 0.1% was written by non-binary composers (di Laccio et al./Donne Foundation, 2022)
- Just over 5% of producers, just under 20% of songwriters and just 29% of artists in the 2021 Top 100 UK Official Charts were women (Donne Foundation, 2021)
- There is a lingering bias towards men in the classical music industry: women music creators are underrepresented not only in performances of their work but also in curricula/education and research (Bennett et al, 2018, considering the Australian context)
- Women are still underrepresented in programming, including representing only 13% of headliners at festivals in 2022. Non-binary artists represent 0.5% of headliners (Mansfield et al./BBC, 2022)

2. Discrimination, harassment and unconscious bias

Focus: *prejudice, intimidation or exclusion due to gender.*

- 78% of discrimination reported in a survey by the Incorporated Society of Musicians was against women (Williams and Bain/ISM, 2022)
- 58% of comments captured in the ISM Dignity at Work survey described discrimination in the form of sexual harassment (Williams and Bain/ISM, 2022)
- The Black Lives in Music survey reported that Black female music creators were more likely to be discriminated against because of their gender than men (44% compared to 4%), but are more likely to be discriminated against because of their race than gender (BLiM, 2021c)
- Over 90% of women music creators report experiencing unconscious bias, many frequently (Kahlert et al./Be the change, 2021)
- There are documented biases in music recommendation engines that discriminate against women (Ferraro et al, 2021)
- The long-term impact of discrimination on a person as well as their creativity and ability to make a living is beginning to be more commonly discussed (Williams and Bain/ISM, 2022; BLiM, 2021a; MPG, 2022)
- 50% of Trans or non-binary music producers experienced sexual harassment at work (MPG, 2022)
- Women are more likely than men to be rated and marketed by their appearance, not taken seriously, or reduced to 'the assumption that their musical success is to a large extent more down to successful self-promotion and marketing on Instagram than to their musical talent' (Keychange, 2021; see also Bain/UK Music, 2019)
- Women face continued challenges, including sexual harassment, and a culture of not reporting harassment when it occurs (Williams and Bain/ISM, 2022; MPG, 2022).
- Recent evidence presented to the Women and Equalities Select Committee on misogyny in the music sector demonstrates how wide-spread the problems still are (Women and Equalities Commission, 2022)



The inequality in the industry is still very much a thing and your fund and the work you do is encouraging women like myself to fight for our seat at the table but also helps boost our confidence by the fact that we feel seen.

Past applicant to Women Make Music

3. Ethnicity and race

Focus: *how an ethnically diverse background intersects with gender and other factors in lived experience in the music industry.*

- The largest ever survey of data focused on the experiences of Black music creators and industry professionals highlights systemic racism (BLiM, 2021a), with 72% of Black music creators experiencing discrimination in the music industry because of ‘industry culture and behaviours’ (BLiM, 2021c)
- UK Music (2022) notes an overall decrease in individuals working in music from a Black, Asian or other ethnically diverse background, especially at entry level and senior level
- 94% of musicians or professionals from a mixed or multiple ethnic background in the industry report discrimination, as do 92% of those from a Black, Black British, Caribbean or African background (Williams and Bain/ISM, 2022)
- 43% of Black women music creators have felt the need to change their appearance because of their race/ethnicity (BLiM, 2021c)
- Black women music creators earn 25% less than their white music creator peers (BLiMc, 2021)
- 43% of Black women music creators felt that they have to change their appearance to fit into the music industry (BLiM, 2021c), with Black music creators also being told that they have to change their music style, or assumptions being made about their music genre/style (BLiM, 2021c) - also something we heard in the survey of Women Make Music grantees
- Black women music creators are more likely to be affected with mental concerns in particular - 42% of respondents report a decline in their mental health and wellbeing since beginning their music career (BLiM, 2021c), compared to 39% of black women music professionals (BLiM, 2021b) and 31% of Black music creators overall (BLiM, 2021c)
- Race-ethnicity diversity is not yet a formal part of the reporting required of those who have signed Keychange pledges, though after gender it is the most often mentioned category after gender (Swartjes et al, forthcoming/Keychange)



From my own experience, having kids has made it difficult to continue with my music, yet my partner has been able to carry on making music, so i feel like women do need an incentive to get back into music and some more support from the music industry

Past applicant to Women Make Music

4. Health, disability, neurodivergence and mental health

Focus: *physical, mental or physiological factors and the effect of this on music careers.*

- Almost 9 in 10 musicians surveyed by Help Musicians report that their career is being impacted by poor mental health, and almost 70% report that their mental health is worse than before the pandemic (Help Musicians, 2022)
- 14.9% of the music industry reports having a disability, with two-thirds of those with a disability reporting that 'they felt they had to compromise their health for work' (UK Music, 2022), similar to the two-thirds of musicians with disabilities who have compromised their health to perform live (Attitude is Everything, 2019)
- UK Music (2022) data suggest that 'neurodivergent conditions are more prevalent in music industry' than in the general population
- Female artists were more likely to experience discrimination if they had a disability, rising from 78% to 80% (Williams and Bain/ISM, 2022)
- Overall, 90% of non-White musicians with a disability have experienced discrimination (Williams and Bain/ISM, 2022)
- Black women with a disability are even more likely to agree that they face barriers to progression (91%) than Black men (86%) and Black women (89%) (BLiM, 2021a)
- From the evaluation data, we see that some Women Make Music grantees reported on the challenges of negative physical health effects due to Covid-19 on their careers, with some issues continuing in the long-term



In our experience disabled music creators who are also female need continuing opportunities to realise their work, and even if they are perceived as being well established in their careers often still experience barriers

Talent Development Programme representative

5. Lack of representation in non-performance and/or technical careers

Focus: *gender imbalance in certain types of music careers.*

- From the evaluation data, we see that:
 - Women may feel that they have to prove themselves more in the technical/production side of the music industry
 - Overall male dominance in other music industry roles (despite recent progress) means that it is difficult to have a balanced team around women artists, especially on the technical/production side
 - More music creators acquire and then feel empowered by gaining production skills
- From recent research, signatories to the gender equity-focussed Keychange pledge are most likely to achieve or make progress towards their goals in the areas of Acts and Panellists but not for employees, which included technical and backstage workers (Swartjes et al., forthcoming/ Keychange)
- 63% of female music creators feel excluded from the 'genderised' fields of composition and production Kahlert et al./Be the change, 2021), and the field of production is overwhelmingly male dominated (Wolfe, 2020; Simpson/PRS for Music, 2021)
- Over 90% of women respondents to a survey by the Music Producers Guild felt discriminated against because of sex or gender (MPG, 2022)



From my own experience, having kids has made it difficult to continue with my music, yet my partner has been able to carry on making music, so i feel like women do need an incentive to get back into music and some more support from the music industry

Past applicant to Women Make Music

6. Parental and caring responsibilities

Focus: *challenges relating to having children (the 'motherhood penalty', Bain/UK Music, 2019) or caring for others, and the responses of others to this, while working as a musician.*

- From the evaluation data, we see that few concert venues or festivals have facilities for children or childcare and few funds explicitly support childcare costs
- There are fewer parents and carers in the music industry (29.7%) compared to the general UK working population (44%) (UK Music, 2022) and they are the group most likely to miss out on work opportunities (UK Music, 2022)
- Internal data provided by Keychange relating to the latest cohort (2020-2023) shows that 13.5% of participants received top-up support for childcare, showing that there is demand for this support

- Parents from a higher-income bracket or socio-economic background were less likely to report challenges with parental responsibilities and a creative career (Brook et al., 2020: 233)
- Child-caring and other caring responsibilities predominantly affect women - over two third of those who report as primary carers are women (UK Music, 2022; see also Brook et al., 2020). Estimates suggest one in four women were doing 90% or more of the childcare during the Covid-19 pandemic (Parents in the Performing Arts, 2021)
- Those from a black, Asian, mixed race or other ethnically diverse background are significantly more likely to be a carer than those from a white background (Beaver, 2022) and they may be more likely to struggle financially and in terms of mental health than carers from a white background (see Carers UK [2022a])
- Caring responsibilities more broadly in society are said to inhibit almost 6 out of every 10 women 'from applying for a new job or promotion', rising to one in every two for those from an ethnically diverse background (Beaver, 2022)
- 8 out of 10 women with caring responsibilities working in dance, music, theatre and opera report working freelance or part-time compared to 59% of other female participants, and more women than men are likely to report turning down work because of childcare responsibilities (McDowall et al./PiPA, 2019), with UK Music reporting that they are three times as likely to do so (UK Music, 2022). In classical music, women are more than twice as likely to turn down work due to caring responsibilities (McDowall et al./PiPA, 2022). UK Music (2022) report that 13.8% of parents and carers, nearly all women, report that they were 'denied work because of care responsibilities'
- There is bias in the sector that certain music jobs (e.g. teaching) are for women because of caring responsibilities (Williams and Bain/ISM, 2022) and cases of the explicit exclusion of women from some jobs if they have children due to challenging work hours or culture (Brook et al., 2020)
- The need to be 'young' in the music industry and the precarity facing cultural workers in general may mean that some miss opportunities in the industry or miss opportunities to have a family, or at least face stress in that decision-making (Brook et al., 2020: 230)
- We didn't come across research on the implications of parental or non-parental caring responsibilities for non-binary or trans music creators
- There was not much research about non-parental caring responsibilities that are reported to impact women more than men (e.g. caring for parents, see Beaver, 2022) and the impact of this on music creators



It's very small circles and it's only once you're in that you have an opportunity to even show that you can, like what you can do. But how do you get in there in the first place?

Interview with music creator and musician

7. Ageism

Focus: long-term career sustainability and the challenges of entering the industry at a later age.

- From the evaluation data, we see that:
 - Only 6% of Women Make Music grantees were aged 45 or older, almost 14% were aged 35 - 44 and the majority (55%) were in the 25 - 34 age bracket
 - Older women music creators may be doubly impacted, due to a lack of support when they were younger as well as continued discrimination against older women music creators. Many past applicants to Women Make Music argue that ageism is at play in the sector, including in the allocation of funding
 - Some of the past applicants to Women Make Music report that it is difficult to enter the industry at a later career stage
 - There is a perception that women must look young to be relevant in the industry
 - Touring older women musicians may struggle with the demands of touring and live performance schedules, e.g. with the need to transport heavy equipment (e.g. backline) particularly if they have no paid crew
- After harassment, ageism was the biggest problem reported by female music creators in the Be the Change survey (Kahlert et al., 2021)
- 47.5% of those who have experienced the menopause/perimenopause in the music industry (11% of the total sample) felt that their work has been affected by it but 76.6% 'have not taken time off work to manage their symptoms' (UK Music, 2022)
- Women are leaving the sector in their mid-forties (UK Music, 2022)
- We didn't come across any research on ageism and non-binary or trans music creators



It's getting better but there's still a huge divide in women having access to music making and even more so for older women. Everything is geared to young women. It's very hard for older women to get in.

Past applicant to Women Make Music

8. Making a professional career as an independent artist

Focus: *the various factors that affect the career of an independent artist, including finances, sustainability, networks, implicit knowledge and confidence.*

- From the evaluation data, we see that:
 - Only 27% of Women Make Music grantees are originally from London, suggesting that a significant proportion of women and gender expansive creators are driven to move to the capital to progress their careers
 - There is a perception from both grantees and industry peers that there is less money/funding overall, particularly outside of mainstream/commercial music
 - There are many 'links in the chain' to being more visible in the industry, e.g. pitching to streaming services, securing distribution, which can be difficult without existing contacts or networks
 - Many have to combine a creative career with a non-creative job, or even other musical jobs, e.g. as a session musician. This affects the time that can be spent on developing their music. This is particularly significant for those entering the music industry from a less affluent socio-economic background
 - Highlighting some of the more systemic issues around the professionalisation, women and gender expansive music creators applying to Women Make Music were less likely to be PRS for Music members at the time they applied than grantees of non-targeted programmes (i.e. 23% of Women Make Music grantees were not yet members of PRS Foundation when they applied).
- The cost of living, or rather, 'cost of working' crisis is already negatively impacting 91% of musicians (Help Musicians, 2022)
- In the Keychange 2021 report, women were more likely than men to state that the lack of networks was a barrier to professional development (27% compared to 18%). Similarly, while both considered existing networks/nepotism to be the biggest barrier to professional development, this was significantly higher for women (54% compared to 29%) (Keychange, 2021)
- 81% of women artists believe that they have too few role models (Kahlert et al./Be the change, 2021), though this was reported by only 31% of women surveyed by Keychange (2021). We see this also in research from 2019 that analysed leaders by music sub-sector/genre (Bain/UK Music, 2019). Many of those applying to Women Make Music were encouraged by seeing previous grantees be successful
- There are key challenges for freelance musicians, ranging from a higher likelihood for harassment and challenges around reporting (Musicians Union, no date), a lack of job and income security, the difficulty of resuming work after parental leave (MPG, 2022) and much more
- Competition amongst women artists may be making the situation worse. Instead of creating an environment where all women artists are empowered, they may fight for the crumbs of what is left. This emerged in our evaluation data, and according to research, 44% of female music creators compete with each other more than they do overall, though a similar number disagree with this (Kahlert et al./Be the change, 2021)

9. Socio-economic background and class

Focus: *how socio-economic background can impede access to music careers and progression in the industry.*

- From the evaluation data, we see that:
 - Grantees mentioned the challenge of entering the industry from a lower socio-economic background
- Experts call the intersection of socio-economic background with other characteristics a 'double disadvantage' (Carey et al., 2020)
- Professionals from more privileged backgrounds were more than twice as likely to secure a job in a creative occupation and 58% of the music, visual and performing arts sector is estimated to be occupied by those from a higher socio-economic background, with 21% from a working class background (Carey et al., 2021). Musicians are one of the most elite occupations with 67% coming from privileged backgrounds (Carey et al., 2021)
- Only 37% of respondents to the UK Music diversity survey identified as working class, though only one fifth of the sample responded to the question (UK Music, 2022)
- Socio-economic background intersects with other characteristics to limit successful careers in the creative industries (Carey et al., 2021)
- Black Lives in Music research shows that Black music creators have lower levels of formal or professional qualifications (53%) than white music creators (78%) with little difference between genders (BLiM, 2021c) - which may have implications on earnings and access to the industry
- Education is directly linked to socio-economic background (and other protected characteristics) (Brook et al., 2020:270-271; Carey et al., 2021; see the data in Hesmondhalgh et al., 2021), with those with a degree and coming from a privileged background in the creative industries 6.5 times more likely to secure a creative role (Carey et al., 2021)



10. Pay: a culture of working or performing for free, and the gender pay gap

Focus: attitudes to pay and the gender pay gap.

- From the evaluation data, we learn that:
 - Many musicians have to rely on favours, or cut down the number of collaborators, in order to create or perform due to the cost of paying others
 - Funded musicians may be more likely to pay others before themselves, exacerbating existing problems about sustainable music careers
 - Support acts continue to be asked to pay for free or for a very little fee that doesn't cover costs
- Women are less represented in the top earning quartile of the industry and more represented in the lowest earning quartile (Williams and Bain/ISM, 2022)
- Only 27% of musicians earn most of their income from music and 62% (the majority) of musicians earn less than £20,000 - and this group are more likely to report that music is their only source of income (Hesmondhalgh et al., 2021)
- More women than men earn less than £20,000 and fewer than half as many women earn more than £40,000 (Hesmondhalgh et al., 2021)
- Black female music creators have average earnings of £1,187 per month as opposed to £1,463 earned by black music creators more generally and the £1,963 earned by white music creators (BLIM, 2021c)
- There is a gender pay and bonus gap in the biggest employers in the music industry (Paine, 2022) - this is significant and in some cases worsening rather than getting better
- The pay gap for those coming from an ethnic background is also significant (Radcliffe, 2022)
- Unpaid entries (e.g. internships) to the music industry are not uncommon, yet the experience of unpaid work is marked by class, location and socio-economic background (Brook et al., 2020:137-139, also 2020:163), with 'younger working-class origin workers' feeling more of the burden (2020:164)



...it seems like the number of female artists applying for funding / number of emerging female artists has increased significantly. This doesn't mean the balance is redressed - but the areas which seem to be most lacking in female representation is the tech / production side.

Past applicant to Women Make Music

SNAPSHOT: INSIGHTS INTO THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Underrepresented and already disadvantaged creatives are likely to have been disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic (Carey et al., 2021; Keychange, forthcoming). Ongoing and perhaps even future efforts to be more inclusive will be affected as a result (Keychange, forthcoming). It is possible that the full impact of the pandemic is yet to be seen.

In addition to what has been learned from the literature, we were able to learn from the evaluation data (where 40% of responses mentioned Covid-19) to draw out some insights from the evaluation data. First, many grantees used the extenuating circumstances form allowing them to change the type of activity the Women Make Music funding would support and positively commented on PRS Foundation's flexibility. Secondly, we saw some tragic consequences of the pandemic on the lives of music creators, as well as some unexpected positives in terms of skills development and collaboration. Thirdly, there was a spike in demand in 2021 that was likely attributable to the prolongation of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Negative impacts of the pandemic include:

- Worsening mental health
- Physical health challenges (for them or collaborators) due to Covid symptoms or Long Covid
- Lack of connection with others
- Loss of income
- Difficulties of timelines and delivering projects
- Artists not supported by government's support schemes
- Extra challenges for those with caring responsibilities e.g. parents

Unanticipated positive impacts include:

- New skills (e.g. learning new software, producing yourself)
- New ways of working (e.g. remote collaboration, producing at home)
- Different business opportunities explored
- Opportunities to collaborate internationally or elsewhere in the UK using digital means

We see, however, that **(mental) health and self-care more generally is a concern that has been exacerbated by the pandemic**. Almost 9 in 10 musicians surveyed by Help Musicians UK report that their career is being impacted by poor mental health, and almost 70% report that their mental health is worse than before the pandemic (Help Musicians, 2022).

Next Steps For Women Make Music

The scale of the challenges to equitable participation and success of women and gender expansive music creators in the music industry could never have been addressed by Women Make Music alone. **A particularly outstanding outcome of Women Make Music is the creative development of those it supports and the confidence that funding gives them.** It provides time for creators to invest in their artistry and musical voice, and then adds a confidence boost through a stamp of legitimacy, strengthening their feeling of having a right to hold space in the industry. It is addressing those most problematic and invisible barriers to success in a biased industry - confidence and strategies to succeed.

We have seen **evidence of improved business and technical skills, a rise in income, new commissions and new bookings.** These are outcomes we would be likely to find across any funding programme. It is perhaps most important that Women Make Music addresses the harder issue of confidence, particularly in light of the slow pace of structural change.



...recognising inequality as a structural issue in cultural occupations might end up justifying no or slow change. We must think carefully about strategies that will be successful.

Brook, O'Brien and Taylor (2020:272)

At the same time, it is important that the burden of creating change does not fall on women and gender expansive music creators and professionals. Our recommendations set out a two-pronged approach; increased targeted support for music creators, giving time and validation for them to focus on their artistry and to increase their confidence, must be matched with proactive action in advocacy and steps to push for structural change in the industry. This includes continued partnership working with Keychange, academia, funders, and other initiatives in the UK to improve what we know and are doing about the challenges facing women and gender expansive music creators. **Most importantly, despite PRS Foundation's success in gender representation across its funds, it must shout the loudest to say that we are still not at a level playing field.**



The lack of gender equality in the music industry continues to be a huge problem. As a young female artist it can be discouraging. Knowing that this fund exists indicates clearly that there are organisations in the music industry who want to make a difference. This support must continue if we are to see longer term and lasting change. Each cohort of women who receive PRS Women Make Music are pushing the industry to be a bit more equal.

Women Make Music grantee

Next Steps For Women Make Music

In addition to the areas for attention discussed in the impact section, we recommend the following next steps.

The Women Make Music fund should continue as a targeted fund. There are a number of key improvements that could enhance the impact of the fund in the years ahead. In particular, it can better address the many stages of women and gender expansive music creators' careers and the barriers that have been worsened due to the Covid-19 pandemic. To do so, PRS Foundation will have to actively reach out to partners in the music industry to expand the availability of funding and parallel support.

1. CONTINUE, ADAPT AND EXPAND WOMEN MAKE MUSIC

- **Explore how to create a fund in two parts**, namely:
 - Seed funding (e.g. up to £1,000) for those with limited or less of a track record, perhaps combined with mentoring. This could be run by an external organisation, dedicated to developing the careers of women artists of all genres.
 - Funding for more established music creators (e.g. up to £5,000 as it presently is). Consider reducing the top level of funding to reach more grantees, particularly as many receive less than they originally requested.
- **Call on partners in the industry to work with PRS Foundation to expand the fund as a model of targeted action**, in response to obvious demand, and in response to the as-yet unknown full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the diversity of the music industry. In expanding the fund, emphasise that investing in women music creators and those underrepresented in the music industry is supporting its future vibrancy and relevance.
- **Evaluate options to rebrand the fund**. Acknowledging that this is dependent on the outcomes of the recommendation below, it is clear that the 'Women Make Music' branding has fans and detractors. Some feel that the brand is not inclusive enough to gender expansive music creators. After more than ten years, it is a strong sector brand. Nonetheless, this should not stop an evaluation of the options to rebrand the fund, and engaging with women and gender expansive creators and professionals over the next few months.

2. CONTINUOUSLY BUILD AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMPLEX CHALLENGES AFFECTING WOMEN AND GENDER EXPANSIVE MUSIC CREATORS

- **Be there for older music creators**. Younger creators are slightly more likely to receive funding through Women Make Music. The programme assess age representation in the pool of advisors and be aware of how age is discussed in decision-making.
- **Continue to address the talent and diversity location drain, especially for gender expansive music creators**. PRS Foundation should connect more with the work of its Talent Development Partners and partners in the industry to 'incubate talent and actively bring through the next generation of diverse artists and live music professionals' at a local music ecosystem level (All Things Equal, 2022).

3. EMBED MENTORING, COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING

- **Embed mentoring or coaching** in future editions of the fund and work with industry partners to ensure that this is sustainable, targeted and available to all who need it. This was recommended frequently by advisors, grantees, past applicants and industry professionals. Some Women Make Music grantees who had access to this in the past through the fund found it valuable and others who had seen that it had once been part of the fund asked that it be reinstated.
- **Create opportunities for existing and future Women Make Music cohorts to link up.** This will help enhance the impact of the funding through advice and support, while also more formally establishing a community that contributes toward more sustainable careers for grantees.
- **Signpost and provide access to networks,** including women only and mixed gender networks, following the recommendations and learning from the successes of Keychange (2021).

4. EMBED SUPPORT FOR PARENTS/CARERS, MUSIC CREATORS WITH DISABILITIES OR HEALTH ISSUES, AND THOSE WITH LOW INCOMES

- **Create a top-up pot to cover the costs of childcare and caring responsibilities.** Taking inspiration from the good practice put in place to cover caregiving costs or participation for Keychange and POWER UP Participants, a similar approach could potentially open the funding to parents who otherwise wouldn't apply.
- **Make more explicit and increase the availability of PRS Foundation's top up funding to support personal assistants for disabled music creators.** This could open the funding up to a wider group of music creators and reduce barriers to creating and performing work.
- **Explore how to change funding criteria to direct support towards women music creators who need it most,** continuing the collaboration with Jerwood and relevant academics working on class and socio-economic background and inclusivity in the sector.

5. ENHANCE PROMOTIONAL, PERFORMANCE AND SHOWCASING SUPPORT

- **Strengthen the promotional possibilities for grantees,** insofar as PRS Foundation's capacity allows, and consider investing in this as an area that has significant added value. Not only does this make the grantee feel good and increase their confidence, but it raises the profile of their music to PRS Foundation's network, which reflects both positively on PRS Foundation and the grantee.
- **Increase partnership working with the live sector to offer more showcasing opportunities.** These are valuable for those who take part and desired by those who do not have the opportunity.
- **Maintain and expand PRS Foundation's commitment to an intersectional approach to showcasing talent,** ensuring that artists of all genres, ages, ethnicity, etc, have access to showcasing opportunities. Advisors and music creators suggested that showcasing opportunities would also help advance creators' careers beyond the funding while also reinforcing PRS Foundation's and any partners' commitments to enhancing representation in the live and performance sector.

6. CONSULT FURTHER WITH GENDER EXPANSIVE CREATORS AND STAKEHOLDERS

This evaluation included a small programme of consultation with gender expansive communities. This programme of consultation must be expanded. PRS Foundation has already committed to continuing this consultation in order to ensure that future support for gender expansive communities is inclusive, welcoming and effective at addressing barriers.

Through this research, we heard that, despite the fund criteria including trans and non-binary people, having the word 'women' in the fund name created some confusion about who exactly was eligible. In particular, we were told that some nonbinary people and trans men may not see the funding as for them or be comfortable seeking funding from the Women Make Music fund.

Finding a solution that best addresses this is dependent on further consultation. This consultation could result in, for example, a new fund that targets and welcomes the intended group more clearly and provides support that addresses some of the unique challenges the community may face when crafting careers in music. This was suggested to us during this research, but it must be further explored.

Further consultation with the stakeholders in question is particularly important considering the lack of research and small sample sizes in existing research.

There's a lot of transphobia in this country right now. Yeah, a lot of homophobia as well. And, you know, it can just take one person to say one thing before you get up on stage and you feel rubbish. So it's an added layer. It's another thing that could affect your time and your ability to create.

Interview with music creator

7. CONTINUE TO BE A POWERFUL SECTOR VOICE ON GENDER EQUITY AND CATALYSE BETTER REPRESENTATION IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY THROUGH FURTHER STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

There has been little progress in gender inclusivity in the sector in the last few years. Increasingly, research is highlighting the intersecting challenges that affect women and gender expansive music creators' careers. There is a lot more to be done to make the music industry a level playing field.

For that reason, it is imperative that PRS Foundation remains a powerful sector voice fighting for more equity and representation in the music industry. Not only must it lead by example and continue to fund those who need the most support to succeed; it should also convene and partner with others to address the sector's most problematic structural challenges, including mindsets towards gender equity.

Lead by example

- **Co-design, pilot and evaluate funding criteria** that address intersectional issues around gender in the sector
- **Continue to report gender and other equality statistics** in wider PRS Foundation funding programmes
- **Continue to evaluate success and share learnings** so that others may learn from PRS Foundation's approach to targeted action

Develop strategic partnerships around tackling sector issues relating to gender and wider inclusivity

- **Work with partners to co-convene a sector event to look back on progress (or the lack of change)** as well as to kick-off the development of a sector roadmap on gender inclusivity. This should strengthen the adoption of existing good practice manifestos and commitments, particularly in light of the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (see Swartjes et al., forthcoming/Keychange).
- **Develop a network of supportive organisations and businesses who want to support more women and underrepresented minorities in music**, similar to how the Keychange programme catalyses businesses around a pledge. Partnerships could include festivals, PR companies and other organisations who can work with grantees to help their work reach a wider audience and set them on the path to sustainable careers.

8. CREATE AND SUPPORT COMMUNITIES OF GRANTEES AND AN ECOSYSTEM FOR WOMEN AND GENDER EXPANSIVE PEOPLE IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

- **Support the establishment of a directory or link to existing directories of women and gender expansive music professionals** (such as producers, engineers, PR, etc.) so that grantees can work with and further support members of their own communities and those who remain underrepresented in music.
- **Consider how to better support organisations to support and nurture local music talent ecosystems and networks of women and gender expansive music creators.** Continue to build on this through the network of Talent Development Partners.
- **Work with others to develop funding to support the training and visibility of women and gender minorities in traditionally male roles**, e.g. recording engineers, live sound engineers, producers, etc.

“

I think ultimately, if people at the top are doing a better job, then it becomes easier for grassroots to do a better job. But it feels like it's reversed. So it's everyone at the bottom that doesn't have any money that's trying to make a difference and trying to get through to the people at the top. When really it would be so much more useful if it was the other way around.

Interview with music creator

Methodology

Rapid literature review



Focus group with grantees



Survey of grantees 2017 - 2022 - 25% response rate



Analysis of evaluation data from grantees 2017 - 2022 (111 responses)



Survey of PRS Foundation advisors, Talent Development Partners and music industry peers - 36 responses



Three in-depth interviews with four sector inclusivity experts and organisations



Survey of past applicants to Women Make Music - 81 responses



Analysis of PRS Foundation grantee and applicant data 2011 - 2022



Research period: November 2022 to February 2023

Acknowledgements

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

NICOLE MCNEILLY

Having worked for PRS Foundation 2011-2014, Nicole was part of the team when Women Make Music was launched. In the years since, she has worked both within and outside of the music industry, working in broader cultural policy and research as well as specific sectors including cultural relations, digital heritage and contemporary art. She has conducted evaluations for a number of organisations, including leading the evaluation of the British Council's UK-Russia Year of Music (2019-2020), the British Council's gender and contemporary art programme *Perceptions* in the Western Balkans (2019), and the Northern Ireland-Morocco British Council-supported collaboration, Pop Up Studios (2013). She leads on impact assessment at Europeana Foundation (The Hague, working across the EU) and has worked as a consultant in different capacities for organisations including the European Commission's DG INTPA, UNESCO, Waag (NL), Voices of Culture (Goethe Institute/ European Commission), InterArts (Spain, EU-wide), and the Heritage Management Association. She is also a collaborator in international consortiums including the Center for Music Ecosystems and culture Solutions.

DR OLIVIA GABLE

Olivia worked in a variety of roles at PRS Foundation between 2012-2018, including supporting the impact evaluation for the original Women Make Music 5 Year evaluation, as well as evaluations of the PPL Momentum music fund and the International Showcase Fund. In 2019, Olivia completed her PhD on the value created by the Momentum music fund for funded artists, artist managers, Arts Council England and PRS Foundation. Since then, she has worked in policy research at the Work Foundation, co-authoring major reports on social class and diversity in the creative industries for the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre. She also worked with James Hannam to research the ways public and private funding support popular music education in Wales, with findings published in the *Journal of Popular Music Education*. Olivia remains active in the music community, running her own monthly community radio show about nostalgic songs on Voices Radio, where she interviews women and gender minorities involved in music about the songs they can't forget. She is also an Associate of Yorkshire Sound Women Network and part of the F-List for Music researchers.



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Read the complete report with methodology and bibliography here:

