

# MAD - MUSIC AND DEPRESSION

## CAN MUSIC MAKE YOU SICK? PART 1: PILOT SURVEY REPORT SUMMARY

For full pilot study report, including interview summaries and details on methodology, please visit [helpmusicians.org.uk/news/publications](http://helpmusicians.org.uk/news/publications)

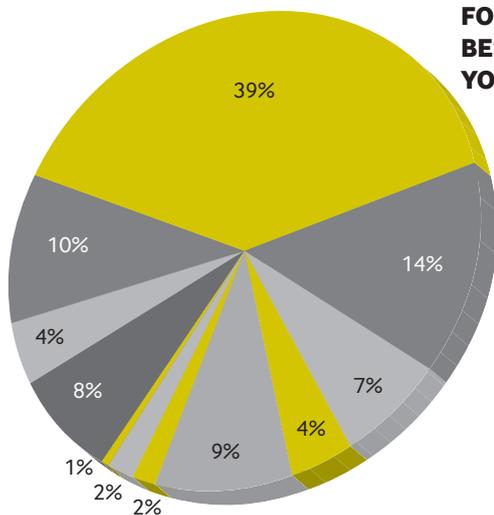
Help Musicians UK is the leading independent charity for musicians in the UK. As part of its MAD [Music And Depression] campaign the charity has commissioned Sally Anne Gross and Dr. George Musgrave, MusicTank / University of Westminster to conduct a study into the mental health issues faced by musicians and the wider music industry.

### AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND REMIT

The focus of the research was to hear directly from musicians and others working within the wider music industry, about their working conditions and how they felt these affected their mental wellbeing.

In this first phase, the University of Westminster launched an industry-wide survey to ascertain the scale of the 'problem' within this workforce. Additional insight was then provided by four case study interviews.

### WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TERMS BEST DESCRIBES YOUR OCCUPATION?



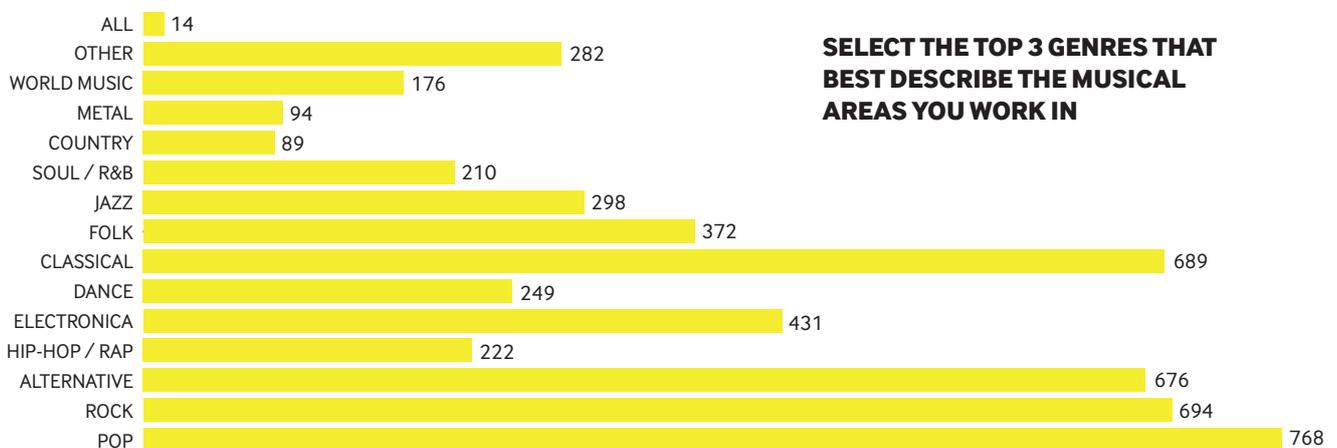
MUSICIAN 39%  
SONGWRITER/ PRODUCER 10%  
SOLO ARTIST 8%  
LABEL OR MUSIC PUBLISHER 7%  
RAPPER 1%  
DJ 2%  
LIVE CREW 2%  
MUSIC MANAGEMENT 9%  
AUDIO PRODUCTION 4%  
(RECORDING STUDIOS, LIVE SOUND ETC.)  
BAND MEMBER 4%  
OTHER 14%

### SURVEY SAMPLE<sup>1</sup>

**2,211 musicians** responded to the online survey, making this the largest ever survey of its kind in the UK, to date. The majority of respondents (66.2%) were between the ages of 18-35. There was a relatively even gender split (55.2% male, 43.9% female).

The largest group of respondents described themselves as musicians (39%) and worked across a wide variety of genres. Other professions represented included DJs, live crew and music management.

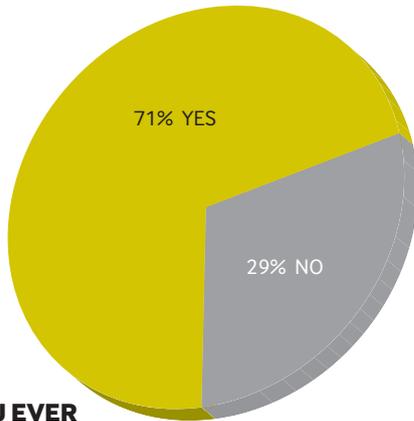
Although there were a large number of respondents from London (39.5%), there were submissions from across the UK, demonstrating that this is a nationwide issue.



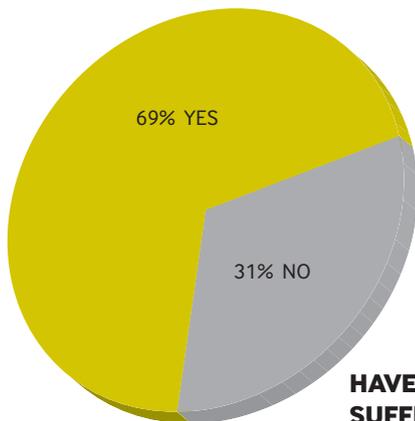
### SELECT THE TOP 3 GENRES THAT BEST DESCRIBE THE MUSICAL AREAS YOU WORK IN

#### <sup>1</sup> NOTES ON RESPONDENTS

- Respondents self-identified as professional musicians
- Respondents self-identified as having mental health issues ranging from anxiety to depression and bipolar disorder.
- Researchers did not medically verify these conditions although many participants spoke of being hospitalised.



**HAVE YOU EVER SUFFERED FROM PANIC ATTACKS AND/OR HIGH LEVELS OF ANXIETY?**



**HAVE YOU EVER SUFFERED FROM DEPRESSION?**

**GAPS IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVISION**

The final finding was that the majority of respondents felt underserved by available help and feel that there are gaps in existing provision.

- Sourcing available help is both time consuming and difficult. That is, the help which is currently available, be it NHS, private or charitable, is not always easy to learn about and/or access;
- There is a sense that when help is provided, there is an overreliance on unwanted, often unhelpful, and expensive pharmaceutical solutions i.e. anti-depressants;
- Non-pharmacological help, when it is provided outside of the NHS system, can be very expensive.

**CONCLUSIONS**

This survey is a vital first step in seeking to understand how musicians and others working within the wider music industry in the UK experience mental health concerns, suggesting where the source of their ill-health might be stemming from, and in beginning to find ways to offer sustainable support.

With the completion of the next phase of the study, which will delve deeper into these issues and then explore a range of solutions, Help Musicians UK hopes to launch a nationwide mental-health service for those in the music industry in 2017.

**FINDINGS**

The most striking of all the findings was that **musicians appear to be suffering from anxiety and depression in significant numbers.**

- **71.1%** of all respondents believed they had suffered from panic attacks and/or high levels of anxiety
- **68.5%** reported they had suffered from depression.

Data collected from the Office for National Statistics between 2010 and 2013 in their reports on 'Measuring National Well-being', suggests that, of those over the age of 16 in the UK, nearly 1 in 5 of the population suffer from anxiety and/or depression.

**THIS SUGGESTS THAT MUSICIANS MAY BE UP TO THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO SUFFER FROM DEPRESSION COMPARED TO THE PUBLIC. \***

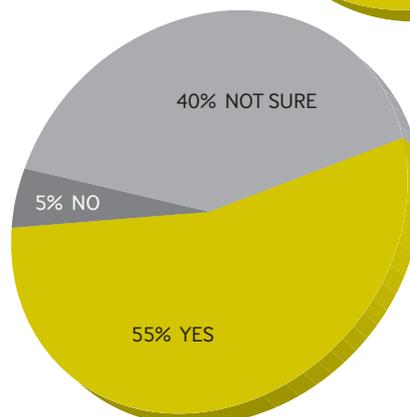
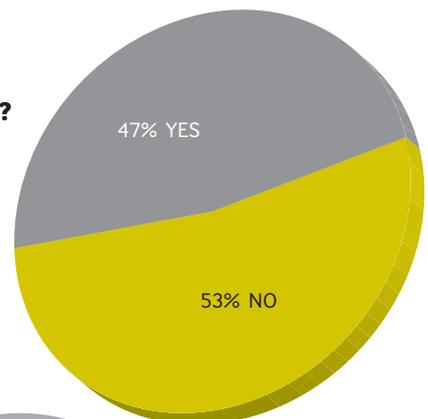
The second indication of these early, preliminary findings suggest that while artists find solace in the production of music, working in the music industry might indeed be making musicians sick, or at least contributing towards their levels of mental ill-health. Respondents attributed this to a variety of reasons including:

- Poor working conditions including: the difficulty of sustaining a living, anti-social working hours, exhaustion and the inability to plan their time/future.
- A lack of recognition for one's work and the welding of music and identity into one's own idea of selfhood
- The physical impacts of a musical career (such as musculoskeletal disorders)
- Issues related to the problems of being a woman in the industry – from balancing work and family commitments, to sexist attitudes and even sexual harassment.

\* According to the ONS (2013), nearly 1 in 5 (19%) of people in the UK aged 16 years or over experienced anxiety or depression (using the GHQ method which asked if they had experienced these things 'recently') in 2010-11. This was consistent across the two subsequent years for which ONS data is available (ONS, 2015), with 18.3% of people (nearly 1 in 5) similarly responding in both 2011-12, and again in 2012-13. Source (accessed Sept 2016): ONS Measuring National Well-being: Health, 2013 (2013): [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766\\_310300.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766_310300.pdf) ONS Measuring National Well-being: Life in the UK, 2015 (2015): [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766\\_398059.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766_398059.pdf)

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

**DID YOU FIND IT EASY TO GET HELP?**



**DO YOU FEEL THERE ARE GAPS IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR MUSICIANS?**