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Blind to the Facts 2023

A project commissioned by Baluji Music Foundation and funded by Vision Foundation.

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1 Executive summary

Commissioned by the Baluji Music Foundation (BMF) and funded by Vision Foundation, this report explores the experiences and barriers associated with working in the UK music industry for blind and visually impaired (BVI) professionals. The project was led by Dr Claire Castle, who works for research charity BRAVO VICTOR, and Dr David Baker from the Institute of Education's Department of Culture, Communication and Media was a co-investigator. Ethical approval was granted for the project by University College London's Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee (Reg: Z6364106/2022/11/104).

The report provides insight into the experiences and views of BVI people working in, or hoping to work in, the industry, and those of employers, providers and other stakeholders with or without experiences of working with BVI professionals. The report draws on data gathered from two studies. Firstly, a survey of 109 respondents, of whom 44 had V.I., and secondly, a series of semi-structured interviews run with 11 interviewees. Five interviewees were BVI musicians (including three members of Inner Vision Orchestra, an ensemble of BVI musicians formed through the Baluji Music Foundation) and six were sighted industry representatives who held various other stakeholder/provider roles. The report updates findings from John Ludlow's Blind to the Facts report, produced in 1995 for the Baluji Music Foundation, which surveyed 50 BVI musicians about their musical careers and barriers they had experienced.

Overall, findings indicate some progress towards inclusion of BVI professionals in the music industry since the 1995 Blind to the Facts report. However, many of the same barriers, and some new challenges, were also evident. Findings are summarised below and compared to findings from the original report. More detail of the experiences and barriers identified in open-ended responses can be found in [Appendix A](#). It should be noted that difficulties experienced by BVI professionals are likely to be greatest amongst those with the highest level of V.I., i.e., those who are blind as opposed to those who are partially sighted. Partially sighted respondents were not well represented in the sample, so comparison of these groups was not possible. More data is needed to explore how the severity of sight loss and age of onset affects professional opportunities.

If you want to contact the Baluji Music Foundation about this project or any of their work, please phone 0207 226 2094 or email baluji@baluji.com.

1.1 Key findings and comparisons with the Blind to the Facts 1995 survey

1.1.1 Transport and travel

In 2023 transport and travel continued to create difficulties for BVI. Respondents reported mixed levels of satisfaction with their ability to travel to work locations and nearly a third were "Dissatisfied" with travel costs. Participants highlighted the

challenges of securing transport as a non-driver, costs of public transport and taxis, and the impact of this on their ability to take work opportunities. The practical challenges of finding venues and entrances were also highlighted, along with the importance of being able to access sighted support in the workplace to assist with navigation and provide other practical support. Lack of transport was also the most commonly cited issue in 1995.

1.1.2 Sheet music and Braille music

In the current study, access to written music remains a barrier for some. Few respondents read Braille music, although this may not be problematic for those who work in genres and styles which do not rely on sheet music. However, a small number observed that lack of access to Braille music training during childhood may hinder later musical engagement and employment in the industry, particularly those working in classical styles. In the survey, over a third of respondents were “Very dissatisfied” with the availability of musical scores in an accessible format. Regardless of the type of score accessed (e.g., Braille, large print, via technology), the time-consuming nature of committing scores to memory was apparent, with implications for participation in ensembles.

Access to written music was also a major problem in 1995, and restricted the music that BVI musicians could play. Large print music was uncommon, and copyright always created difficulties for enlarging and reprinting music. Braille Music was essential to classical musicians and those who wanted to graduate from music college.

1.1.3 Information

Access to information is a barrier for many BVI musicians. Despite the increase in online information sources, there is a lack of information about venues and, particularly, how exactly to travel to, and enter, buildings. In the current study, even when BVI had successfully navigated to a venue, some still struggled to find the correct entrance. This information may be essential for BVI professionals to feel confident attending new workplaces, and ensuring they can remain independent when travelling to, and around, work environments. Consequently sighted support was felt to be particularly important for navigation to, and around, workplaces, especially in locations.

In 1995 access to information was also limited, including details of venues, agents, record companies, studios, fellow musicians, festivals. Existing sources were not available in accessible formats. This made it difficult for BVI musicians to identify performance opportunities.

1.1.4 Technology

In 2023, technology allows easier access to scores, and new ways of listening to, and learning, music. However, some BVI professionals are struggling to access

and utilise this technology. Accessibility settings were found to create difficulties when using some Apps, and continual updates to software left some without access to their technology. A third of BVI survey respondents were “Satisfied” with how easy it is to use music technologies relevant to their roles but nearly a third were “Dissatisfied”. Barriers relating to costs and access to training were highlighted and work is needed to ensure accessible technologies in production spaces. There has been rapid progress over the last 20 years in social media. Because this is primarily a visual medium it is an area where support is required by BVI professionals if they do not have the ability or confidence to produce content, present themselves online, and develop a professional “image”. In 1995, access to new technology was often limited and many musicians felt marginalised.

1.1.5 Professional representation and agents

Representation remains a significant issue for BVI musicians in 2023. Just four out of 44 respondents with V.I. reported using an agency, and 2 a manager, to find work. Even the most active blind musicians in the research are unable to find representation. This issue was also problematic in 1995, and few musicians reported having an agent or management of any kind. Whilst not essential, most were actively seeking some kind of representation to provide specialised support (e.g., to deal effectively with record companies, venues, etc., and use the correct language to promote themselves effectively).

1.1.6 Recording and sound engineering

Four respondents were paid, and 7 unpaid, for sound recording and music production work over the last 12 months. Accessibility issues are apparent in recording environments. Recording hardware which operates through LCD has no speech software interface, making it difficult to operate independently. Music software is also problematic, and ultimately requires sighted support.

In 1995, many respondents expressed an interest in obtaining help with recording, with a general view that the recording studio was suited to sighted people only. However, a number of respondents had their own studios, dispelling the notion that a BVI professional would be unable to function effectively in these spaces.

1.1.7 Formal training

The majority of respondents in 2023 had undergone some formal music training; 61%, for example, had undertaken graded examinations. Participation in workshops or short courses and formal instrumental or vocal training at a conservatoire or other institution were also common. Only a small proportion had not undertaken any formal music training. This may reflect an overall trend over the last 20 years of increasing numbers of young people attending higher education institutions, and potentially, increased access to courses and training for BVI musicians. This is in marked contrast to the 1995 report when around 50% of

respondents lacked formal training and relied on self-taught skills. The vast majority would have welcomed formal music education.

1.1.8 Social inclusion and networking opportunities

There is a lack of networking opportunities within the industry which would enable BVI to benefit professionally. In the current study, the most common reason given by BVI participants for not working in the industry was not having enough contacts to secure regular employment, followed by not feeling confident enough to pursue a career in the industry and not having the right skills to do so. The importance of access to peer support, particularly from those in similar roles and with similar experiences with V.I., was highlighted, along with difficulties accessing this support. In 1995, the need for networking was also highlighted, and isolation was identified as a major issue.

1.1.9 Discrimination and employment opportunities

Despite a general positive shift in the landscape of access, inclusion, and diversity, the 2023 study found that discrimination remains a significant concern. Participants reflected on the impact of 'invisible' discrimination, feelings of missing out on opportunities because of negative attitudes towards V.I., incorrect assumptions about BVI and their abilities, and concern over revealing a V.I. to employers for fear of negative reactions. A continued lack of employment opportunities was highlighted. Over a third of BVI respondents were "Very dissatisfied" with their ability to secure regular work, and nearly a third with the variety of work available to them. Indeed, almost half worked less than 1-2 days a week, just 19% reported that all of their income came from the music industry, and 32% reported having one or more jobs outside the music industry. By far the most common paid and unpaid musical activity amongst BVI respondents was live performance.

Results reflected those from 1995, which found that discrimination was a key concern. The need to highlight injustices and discrimination through direct action and awareness raising was noted, and the role that IVO might take in doing so was also highlighted.

1.1.10 Disability arts

'Disability arts' remains a contentious issue for respondents. The existence of movements, projects and initiatives targeted towards greater inclusion of BVI and those with other disabilities has provided many with employment and development opportunities which do not exist elsewhere. However, there are concerns amongst BVI respondents and employers/providers that these could potentially damage employment prospects if they are confined only to disability arts opportunities and not integrated into the mainstream. Given the continued challenges experienced by BVI in the industry, ensembles and organisations supporting these individuals still have a vital role to play in providing opportunities, support, and promotion, and

sharing best practices with other organisations. Those individuals who had been involved with Inner Vision Orchestra (IVO) noted its positive impact on confidence, well-being, team working skills, and learning opportunities. However, as one provider noted, there must also be work done to ensure that 'mainstream' musical environments are available to these musicians too.

Similar findings were reported in 1995. 'Disability arts' was felt to have little relevance to BVI musicians, although there was support for an organisation dedicated to the interests of BVI musicians. This was the reason Inner Vision Orchestra was formed, with the Paraorchestra following.

1.1.11 Views of employers

The 1995 study focused mainly on musicians, but the current study also surveyed employers and industry representatives. There is a lack of BVI working in the industry, particularly in leadership or management roles. The most common reason given by employers who had not worked with BVI professionals was that they had rarely come across them in their field of work (90%). Consequently, BVI participants highlight a lack of role models for BVI professionals. Whilst nearly half of employers felt "Very confident" about hiring someone with V.I., a third were "Not confident at all" about ensuring recruitment materials were accessible or using schemes such as Access to Work. Just 3 out of 30 reported being a "Disability Confident" employer and 10 were not sure if their organisation was part of this government scheme. Given the self-selecting nature of the sample of employees in the current study, it is likely that awareness of the needs of BVI professionals may be lower amongst the wider music industry.

1.1.12 Employment support and training

In the 2023 survey, respondents were asked about the types of support that they received and sought. 44% of BVI respondents were "Dissatisfied" with the availability of training to support professional development. Whilst sight loss organisations are a source of employment support, there may be limits to what they are able, or willing, to provide. Tasks deemed non-essential (e.g., buying clothes) may not be supported, but may be essential to the image development for BVI professionals. Over a third of BVI respondents were "Very dissatisfied" with how easy it is to apply for the "Access to Work" scheme. Challenges with the scheme included the time required to set-up support, the need to claim back expenses (rather than be provided with financial support up-front), inaccessible forms, and a lack of understanding of the scheme for freelance workers.

1.2 Recommendations

1.2.1 Accessing venues and workspaces

Whilst venues typically provide some information online, this may not always be accessible or complete. All venues and workplaces (this might include schools and all public performance spaces) should develop a complete source of information

about their venue/workplace covering key areas of importance to BVI people including:

- Public transport options to the location
- Car and taxi instructions for arrival, drop-off, and parking (including details or disabled parking spaces and charges)
- Walking instructions from local bus/train stations
- Description of entrance and exit locations, and details regarding the nature of entrances and exits (e.g., automatic doors, revolving doors)

For those travelling alone, support entering a building may be required. A contact number to arrange this prior to arrival should be provided.

1.2.2 Access and inclusion as markers of quality

Given the challenges still experienced by BVI professionals, it appears that access and inclusion still appear to be treated as non-essential. As one venue representative highlighted in the current project, access and inclusion should be seen as markers of quality, enabling representation of different groups in different musical and cultural spaces and workplaces.

An initiative run by individuals with lived experience of sight loss directed by an organisation such as the IVO should work with all relevant locations to ensure working practices and physical environments meet the needs of BVI professionals. This should be an accredited scheme and should cover:

- Recruitment or audition processes
- Recruitment materials
- Software and technological requirements
- Physical environments
- Provision of information (e.g., about a venue/workspace and about upcoming jobs and opportunities)

1.2.3 Initiatives to support greater inclusion of BVI professionals

Mentoring schemes which enable networking opportunities for BVI musicians should be set up by large promoters, producers, agents and record companies. These should be supported by organisations such as UK Music, the BMF and the Musicians Union. The work of Attitude is Everything has made significant progress in the accessibility of venues, and their Beyond The Music initiative is working to ensure that aspiring and active industry professionals with access requirements can forge careers in the industry. Promotion of this initiative to BVI professionals may increase awareness and access to support. This could be done directly through IVO or other organisations, of whom participants were commonly members (e.g., RNIB, the Musicians Union). All music organisations should be encouraged to reach out to BVI people, all disability organisations should include the specific requirements of BVI people, and all diversity initiatives should address BVI-specific needs.

A database of volunteers who can act as sighted guides would help to provide essential support.

1.2.4 Marketing and PR training for BVI musicians

BVI musicians would benefit from support and training in how to present themselves as a public persona and through social media. The survey highlighted a lack of confidence and skill in communicating with the public in person and through social media. Sight loss organisations could provide one-to-one training or workshops in these areas including support in setting up an EPK to assist in promotion.

1.2.5 Partnerships between the cultural and the sight loss sector

Venues or employers in the music industry should consult the sight loss sector (e.g., local sight loss charities) to increase their understanding of the experiences and needs of BVI people. This would help to reduce discrimination and many of the barriers highlighted (e.g., increasing accessibility in key areas such as recruitment, information accessibility, and venue accessibility). These partnerships could facilitate collaborative events and bring BVI performers and audience members into a greater number of musical spaces.

1.2.6 Shared resources for employers/providers

A handbook of best practice relating to all aspects of accessibility for BVI people should be produced and shared within the music industry (e.g., venues, employers, agencies, event organisers etc.). This could be used alongside training workshops which raise awareness of the needs of BVI professionals.

1.2.7 Tailored information relating to Access to Work

It is essential that Access to Work improve its application process, including the accessibility of information and forms. There is also a need for information targeted towards self-employed, freelance BVI professionals working in the music sector. A collation of relevant information for this group may help to ensure the scheme is accessible to all eligible BVI musicians. This could be made available through, for example, RNIB's Music Advisory Service and/or other sight loss charities.

1.2.8 Locating BVI musicians

BVI musicians noted the challenge of identifying work opportunities, and employers highlighted the difficulty in reaching these individuals. A roster of BVI musicians and other professionals could be a valuable resource. This Should be hosted online by BMF and promoted via email to venues and organisations.

1.2.9 Networks and peer support

The BMF needs to expand its capacity to be able to list upcoming opportunities.

There needs to be a central repository of links to support and networking groups of

BVI professionals, covering different areas of professional involvement e.g., music education, production, performance etc. Information on how to join these channels could be advertised via BMF, via sight loss charities, and musical organisations such as the Musicians Union.

1.2.10 Recommendations from BVI professionals other BVI professionals or aspiring professionals

- Be proactive in communicating needs clearly to others
- Make use of an Access Rider (a document that states the requirements of an individual)
- Provide feedback on accessibility to venues, organisations, and employers (individuals and organisations are unlikely to improve in areas such as access and inclusion without both positive feedback and areas for improvement being highlighted)

2 Introduction

2.1 Baluji Music Foundation and Inner Vision Orchestra

This project was commissioned by The Baluji Music Foundation (BMF), a blind-led, inclusive arts organisation encouraging participation in music by people from different cultural backgrounds and programming and promoting events featuring BVI musicians. The Inner Vision Orchestra (IVO) of professional blind musicians performs nationally and internationally and has released music on Arc/Naxos.

2.2 About the authors

Dr Claire Castle works for research charity BRAVO VICTOR, which specialises in research and innovation aimed at preventing and reversing V.I., and reducing the impact of V.I. and related conditions and disabilities. Claire's doctoral research explored the musical experiences of BVI people. Dr David Baker has been a co-investigator on the project, advising on project design and content. David is Associate Professor in the Institute of Education's Department of Culture, Communication and Media, and delivered the "Visually-impaired musicians' lives" (VIML) project alongside Professor Lucy Green. He has a strong research interest in inclusive, accessible music education.

2.3 Aims of the project

This project builds on an earlier published report, *Blind to the facts: An Exploration of the Needs of Blind and Visually Impaired Musicians* (1995), delivered by John Ludlow for The Inner Visions Music Company (now the Baluji Music Foundation). This work surveyed 50 BVI musicians about their working life, challenges they experienced, and how support might contribute to overcoming these challenges. The project identified travel as a key issue, along with access to music (including cost of enlarged print and copyright issues), and a lack of accessible information on topics such as venues, agents, record companies, studios, fellow musicians and festivals. The current project considers current issues for BVI musicians and professionals in music, and those aspiring to work in the industry, and includes the voices of employers, providers and stakeholders to better understand how accessibility, inclusion and diversity might be improved.

2.4 Funding

The current project is funded by the Vision Foundation.

2.5 Ethics

Ethical approval was granted for the project by University College London's Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee (Reg: Z6364106/2022/11/104). All participants involved in the research were aged 18 years or above.

3 Methods

3.1 Survey study

A survey collected quantitative data and qualitative feedback from respondents from the following groups:

- BVI musicians and other music-industry professionals
- BVI people aspiring to work in the music industry
- BVI people working in subsidiary or industry-adjacent roles (e.g., broadcasting, journalism or campaigning)
- BVI or sighted employers, providers and other stakeholders in the industry
- BVI or sighted people who used to work in the industry as a musician/other professional, or employer/provider

3.1.1 Materials and recruitment

Question types included multiple-choice, rating questions (e.g., ratings of satisfaction) and open-ended response boxes. A copy of all survey questions can be found in [Appendix B](#). Survey respondents were recruited via the sharing of a link to the anonymous, online survey on the website, social media channels and internal mailing lists of the BMF, and lead researcher's institution's website and social media channels. The link was also shared with contacts within the sight loss sector and the music industry. A total of 109 survey responses were gathered.

3.1.2 Survey data analysis

Demographic data and quantitative data from closed-response questions are reported descriptively (e.g., frequencies and proportions of responses). Where relevant, findings are reported for the sub-groups listed above. Note, there are sections of the report which outline findings relating to only one small sub-sample.

Open-ended survey responses were analysed thematically and are incorporated in the discussion of key topics to illustrate findings. In some instances, the number of times a topic was mentioned in responses is reported, to provide some indication of the level of importance of issues or challenges.

3.2 Interview study

Semi-structured interviews were run with 11 representatives from the above groups to explore their experiences and opinions in more depth. This included individuals who had responded to the survey and some who were contacted directly to take part (e.g., contacts at organisations known to the Baluji Music Foundation).

3.2.1 Materials and procedure

Interviews lasted for around an hour and were held via online call (or video call where possible) and recorded for transcription purposes. An interview guide was used to structure the interviews, but this was used flexibly and questions varied depending on the roles and experiences of the interviewee. Musicians were asked

about their journey to becoming a professional in music, challenges experienced, treatment from others in the industry, sources of support, and advice to others. Employers or providers were asked about their experience of working with BVI people, the concepts of access and inclusion and how these impacted on their work, support provided to employers to ensure access and inclusion, and how they felt this might be improved in the future.

3.2.2 Interview data analysis

Interview data were analysed thematically to identify, analyse and report patterns across the dataset. Quotes from interviewees are used to illustrate themes throughout the report.

3.2.3 Structure of the current report

The current report collates survey and interview results to offer an overview of experiences of participants involved in both studies. Appendices provide a series of tables which contain full results from the survey.

4 Overview of participants

4.1 Overview of the full sample

Of the 109 respondents...

- Around 90% were from England. Of these, 48 (44%) were from London ([Table 1](#) in Appendix C outlines all locations).
- The mean age was 46.86 years ($SD= 14.29$). The majority were aged 31-40 and White ($n= 76, 69.72\%$).
- Around half of the sample were female ($n= 50, 45.87\%$) and half male ($n= 54, 49.54\%$).
- 69 (63.30%) reported having a disability or condition, most commonly V.I. ($n= 44, 40.40\%$), mental health condition ($n= 13, 11.93\%$), and hearing impairment ($n= 6, 5.50\%$).
- [Table 2](#) in Appendix C outlines full sample demographics.

4.1.1 Roles and time in the industry.

Of 108 respondents who reported their role in the industry ([Table 3](#), Appendix C)

- The majority were hired by the industry ($n= 44, 40.74\%$), including roles such as instrumentalists, singers, sound producers, composers, and teachers.
- 16 were an employer or provider in the industry (14.81%).
- 15 (13.89%) were both an employee and employer within the industry.
- A small number were working in subsidiary roles ($n= 8, 7.41\%$), or used to work in the industry ($n= 6, 5.56\%$).
- 10 respondents said that they did not currently work in the industry but would like to (9.26%).
- The majority of those working in the industry, or who had done so in the past, had done so for over 10 years ($n= 62, 69.11\%$) ([Table 4](#), Appendix C).

4.1.2 Membership of organisations, unions and ensembles.

Of the full sample...

- 27 (24.78%) were associated with Baluji Music Foundation.
- 25 (22.94%) were associated with Inner Vision Orchestra, the Musician's Union, and RNIB.

Of the 44 BVI sighted respondents...

- 13 (29.55%) were associated with BMF, 14 (31.82%) and 22 (50%) with RNIB.
- British Paraorchestra was the next most common organisation that BVI respondents were associated with ($n= 9, 20.45$) along with the Musician's Union ($n= 9, 20.45$) ([Figure 1](#) and [Table 5](#) in Appendix C).

4.2 Overview of blind and visually impaired respondents

Of the 44 BVI respondents...

- Most respondents were from England (88.64%), and specifically London ($n=16$, 36.36%) ([Table 6](#), Appendix B).
- Again, there was an almost equal gender split.
- The majority identified as White (68.18%) and the mean age was similar to the full sample ($M=44.65$, $SD=15.17$) ([Table 7](#), Appendix B)
- 13 (29.55%) had an additional disability, health condition or disorder, most commonly, a mental health condition ($n=5$, 11.36%) ([Table 8](#), Appendix B).
- The majority ($n=37$, 84.09%) reported a severe sight impairment (blindness), with 6 (13.64%) reporting sight impairment (partial sight) and 1 a sight impairment that was not registered ([Table 9](#), Appendix E).
- Most had been born with their V.I. ($n=27$, 61.36%), four (9.09%) developed a V.I. aged 19-34 years, but none had developed a V.I. later in their adulthood.

4.2.1 Music at school.

The majority of BVI respondents had attended mainstream education, including primary ($n=21$, 47.73%) secondary ($n=23$, 52.57%) and further education, e.g., sixth form or college ($n=15$, 34.09%) ([Table 10](#), Appendix E). At school, the most common musical activity was performing in a show ($n=30$, 76.92%), followed by learning an instrument, including voice ($n=24$, 61.54%), and learning musical theory ($n=22$, 56.41%) ([Table 11](#), Appendix F). The numbers taking part in these activities were similar for those who attended only mainstream education and those who attended a specialist institution at some point, although there were some notable differences in the reading of scores and Braille ([Table 12](#), Appendix F). A greater number of respondents who had attended a specialist institution at some point had learned Braille notation at school, and less so as an extracurricular, than those only attending mainstream education. In contrast, a greater proportion of those who had attended only mainstream education reported learning to read score notation than amongst those who had attended a specialist institution.

4.2.2 Instruments, voice, and training.

The most common instrument was piano or keyboards ($n=24$, 54.55%), followed by voice ($n=23$, 52.27%) and drums or percussion ($n=13$, 29.55%) ([Table 13](#), Appendix G). Several respondents specified the musical genres in which they participated, which included classical performance and a range of 'world' music.

Respondents played a mean of 2.76 instruments (including voice), with 32 playing 2 or more instruments. The majority had undergone some formal training, most commonly graded examinations ($n=27$, 61.36%) ([Table 14](#), Appendix G).

Participation in workshops or short courses ($n=19$, 43.18%), and formal instrumental or vocal training ($n=15$, 34.09%) at a conservatoire or other musical institution were common. 6 respondents had not undertaken any formal music training, all of whom were either currently working in the industry or used to.

7 (15.91%) reported being fluent in the Braille music system, and 11 (25%) had some experience ([Table 15](#), Appendix G). As highlighted above, greater numbers had learned Braille at school, which may indicate a loss of engagement later on.

4.3 Employment of blind and visually impaired respondents

4.3.1 Roles and time in the music industry.

As in the wider sample, the majority of BVI respondents were currently hired by the industry ($n= 23$, 53.49%) ([Table 17](#), Appendix H). Just 1 was an employer, and 4 were both an employee and an employer/provider.

There were 6 BVI respondents (13.95%) who did not currently work in the music industry but said that they would like to. As with the wider sample, most respondents with V.I. who were currently or used to work in the industry had done so for over 10 years ([Table 18](#), Appendix H).

4.3.2 Types of paid and unpaid work over the last 12 months.

Over the last 12 months, the most commonly reported paid roles in the industry for BVI respondents were live performance, teaching, recording as a solo artist, and composition. Of those who had been paid for live performances ($n= 23$), the most common types were solo performances ($n= 16$, 36.36%) ([Table 20](#), Appendix H). The small number who were paid for composition ($n= 5$) were most commonly paid for film and TV/radio composition (both $n= 3$) ([Table 21](#), Appendix H).

Paid work (from most common to least common)

- Live performances, $n= 23$ (52.27%)
- Instrumental or singing tutor, $n= 12$ (27.27%)
- Solo recording artist, $n= 6$ (13.64%)
- Composition, $n= 5$ (11.36%)
- Session recording artist, $n= 4$, (9.09%)
- Sound recording and music production, $n= 4$ (9.09%)
- Training others in music technology and/or music production, $n= 3$ (6.82%)
- Busking $n= 3$ (6.81%)
- Musical arranging, $n= 1$ (2.27%)
- DJing (excluding radio DJing), 0
- Ensemble lead, 0
- Prefer not to say, 0
- *None of the above*, $n= 3$ (6.81%)

Excluding work undertaken as a musician (e.g., performer, composer, ensemble lead), BVI respondents had undertaken various roles in the music industry, including most commonly, sound engineering and production ($n= 7$, 19.44%) and broadcasting ($n= 5$, 13.89%) ([Table 20](#), Appendix H).

Unpaid work

- Live performances, $n= 17$ (38.64%)
- Solo recording artist, $n= 9$ (20.45%)
- Composition, $n= 9$ (20.45%)
- Musical arranging, $n= 9$ (20.45%)
- Sound recording and music production, $n= 7$ (15.91%)
- Training others in music technology and/or music production, $n= 5$ (11.36%)
- Session recording artist, $n= 3$ (9.09%)
- Instrumental or singing tutor, $n= 4$ (9.09%)
- DJing (excluding radio DJing), 0
- Busking, 0
- Ensemble lead, $n= 2$ (4.55%)
- Prefer not to say, 0
- *None of the above*, $n= 16$ (36.36%)

Fewer respondents reported undertaking musical activities unpaid (16 said that they had not undertaken any of the activities listed unpaid). The most common unpaid musical activity was live performance. A small number had fulfilled subsidiary or supporting roles unpaid ([Table 20](#), Appendix H).

4.3.3 Employment status, income, and work outside the industry.

Details of employment status, hours, income, and financial support are outlined in [Table 23](#), Appendix I. The majority of BVI respondents who were hired by the industry described themselves as self-employed ($n= 18$, 58.06%). Almost as many reported working less than 1-2 days a week ($n= 15$, 48.39). Fourteen (45.16%) reported that less than half of their income came from the music industry, and just 6 that all of their income came from music (19.35%).

A large proportion received government financial support ($n= 25$, 80.65%) and 14 (31.82% of 42 respondents) had either had one or multiple jobs outside the industry over the last 12 months. The most common jobs held outside the industry were in community and social services (e.g., disability or family services) ($n= 4$), media and broadcasting ($n= 4$) and government and public administration ($n= 3$) ([Table 24](#), Appendix I).

4.3.4 Working with other blind and visually impaired professionals.

Of 36 BVI respondents, the majority ($n= 15$, 41.67%) rarely worked with others with V.I. Nearly a third ($n= 11$, 30.56%) said they did so often ([Table 25](#), Appendix J).

4.3.5 Work undertaken by those not currently working in the industry.

The four BVI respondents who used to work in the industry were asked what roles they had undertaken. Two of these individuals had been hired as a musician or other professional, and two had been both employees and employers/providers. One had held a leadership role, working as a director. For the 25 BVI respondents who were not currently working in the industry, or who used to work in the industry, the most common reason for not working in the industry was not having enough contacts to secure regular employment ($n= 6, 24\%$), not feeling confident enough to pursue a career in music ($n= 5, 20\%$), and not having the right skills to establish or progress a career in music ($n= 5, 20\%$) ([Table 26](#), Appendix K).

4.3.6 Aspirations of those who would like to work in the music industry.

The 6 respondents who aspired to work in the industry all reflected on a goal of working as a performing musician, with four stating that they would like to be a singer, and two that composing was an important part of their aspirations ([Table 27](#), Appendix K, shows full responses from 6 of the 7 aspiring professionals).

Figure 1. Membership and associations with organisations, unions and ensembles.

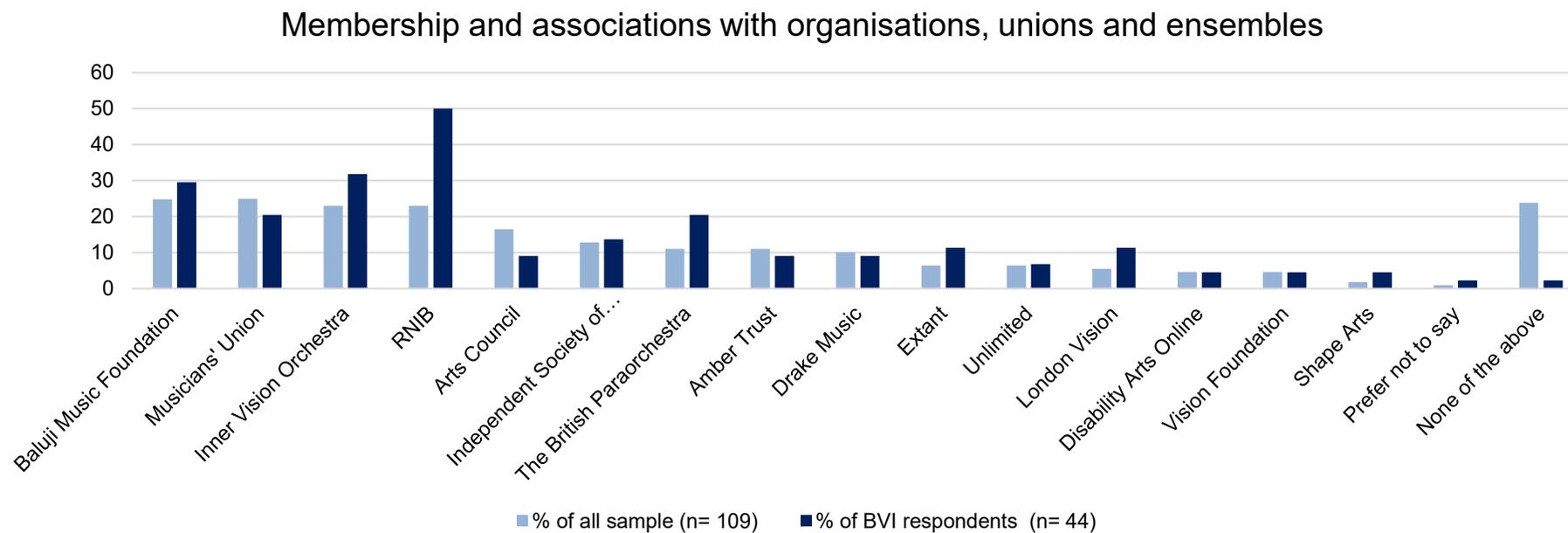
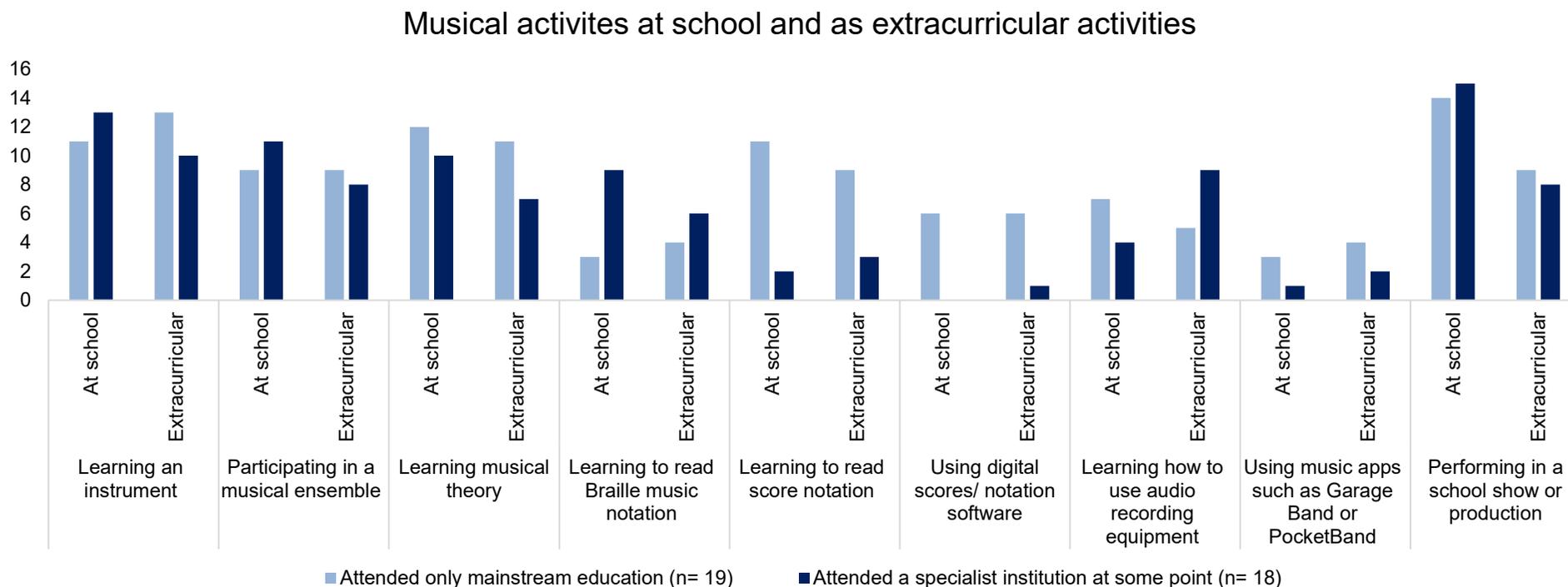


Figure 2. Musical activities at school for blind and visually impaired respondents who did or did not attend a specialist institution.



4.4 Overview of interviewees

Eleven interviews were undertaken ([Table 28](#) provides an overview of interviewees). Five interviewees were BVI musicians, one of whom held a directing role in a live music charity and ran music workshops as part of this role but was no longer performing themselves. Three out of five of these musicians were a member of IVO. Six others were interviewed, who held various roles within the industry, including venue directors, individuals working in community engagement and participation, and another two individuals who were directors of a music-based charity. These individuals had experience of working towards access for, and inclusion of, groups underrepresented in music-making, audiences and artist rosters, including people with V.I., disability, or neurodivergence. Four were currently, or had been, involved in work focusing around increasing the representation of BVI people as either creatives or audience members.

Table 28. Music and industry background of interviewees, and location.

Interviewee	V.I.	Role in the industry	Time in UK music industry	Details	Location
1	Yes, SSI	Musician, teacher, performer	15+ years	IVO member. Member of British Paraorchestra	London
2	Yes, SSI	“Semi-professional” pianist, performer, composer	8 years	Studying PhD in access and music technology. Performer: Hotels, weddings, bands, theatre, university ensembles	Northern Ireland
3	Yes, SSI	“Professional”, freelance musician, performer, teacher	25+ years	IVO member. Member of multiple ‘inclusive’ ensembles, including British Paraorchestra	Cambridgeshire
4	Yes, SSI	Musician, performer, used to teach	30+ years	IVO member. Actively involved in activities to improve access for BVI musicians	London

5	Yes (worsened age 27/28), SI	Charity director (accessible music), musician, singer	15+ years	Used to work in music education administration and lead workshops	West Yorkshire
6	No	Musician, songwriter and recording artist. Artist producer and manager of 'inclusive' ensemble	30+ years	Actively involved in activities to improve access for BVI musicians	London
7	No	Venue manager	30+ years	Involved in The British Association of Concert Halls or BACH; venue is actively engaged in community outreach; previously hosted performance of IVO members	Southampton

8	No	Charity director (live music), background as a musician and instrumental teacher	15+ years	Charity actively pursuing an “inclusive recruitment drive”. Worked with various community outreach/engagement programmes in the past	London
9	No	Council representative (culture), background and career in music	20+ years	Current role is focused on cultural equity and community engagement. Previously a freelance musician, performer, and Arts Council relationship manager	London
10	No	Performing arts manager	2 years	Worked with IVO on initiative to support BVI musicians	London

11	No	Head of Engagement and Participation at a venue (community)	20+ years	Previously worked in arts participation and access. Background in performing arts. In contact with sight loss charity to explore partnership and increase access for BVI attendees.	Southampton
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5 Improvements in access and inclusion in the music industry

In general, BVI participants across both studies reflected on improvements in accessibility in the UK music industry over time. This included increased access to information, improved training relating to access and disability, and greater inclusion of people with V.I. and other disabilities in musical spaces.

I guess 10-ish years ago when I was first kind of losing my sight, and then I just couldn't even access the information that I needed, let alone, you know, if I ask anyone, if they could make any accommodations, it was kind of ignored (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

I think attitudes are changing and have changed and I don't now get this thing about, "oh well, you can't do it cause you can't see the conductor" (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

Reflecting this, when asked to reflect on satisfaction with different aspects of access and inclusion in the industry, a greater proportion of survey respondents were 'Very satisfied' with the statement "Feeling being welcomed by sighted people in the workplace" than for any other statement listed (10 respondents were "Very satisfied", and 10 respondents were "Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied") ([Figure 3](#) and [Table 29](#), Appendix L).

5.1 Attitudes towards diversity and inclusion

During interviews, industry representatives from venues and organisations emphasised the increased importance of considerations of diversity and inclusion. Interviewee P11 commented that for them and their venue, inclusive practise was essential to achieving diversity of audience and artists and thus, a key marker of quality, 'I think if we want to say we're a world class concert venue, then that [inclusivity and representation of different communities] has to be there'.

P8 (Charity director) noted the positive impact that the pandemic had had on opportunities to make change at their organisation. This time had allowed them to 'press stop' on ongoing work and 'examine what barriers we were putting up at as an organisation to people coming to work for us'. P8 acknowledged the likelihood that post-pandemic, the same opportunity might be harder to come by. P7 reflected similarly on the pandemic 'highlighting people just didn't have access in the way that they wanted or needed' to cultural spaces. Still, both P7 and P11 reflected on the inconsistency in towards access and inclusion in the industry.

It feels a bit piecemeal at the moment rather than a coordinated approach (P7, Venue representative).

I think it's [inclusion of employees/performers with V.I.] really variable in different organisations (P11, Venue representative, Head of Engagement and Participation)

P7 highlighted that it is important not to focus solely on accessibility as a general concept, but one which might require something different for different people.

In terms of people asking us about deaf awareness and just access issues for other groups, other communities and things, it suddenly it's trying to align some things which are consistent across all areas, but also other things that are very bespoke to the particular needs of that sort of situation (P7, Venue representative)

A one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to meet the wide-ranging needs of individuals with disability.

5.2 Initiatives and programmes

Interviewees were involved in a variety of targeted initiatives and programmes centring around access, inclusion, and diversity. This included partnerships with sight loss organisations. Such activities sought to increase inclusion of BVI people, as both performers and consumers. P7 and P11, who represented the same venue, had established a partnership with a local charity for sight loss, which had resulted in opportunities for gaining attendee feedback to inform practise and policy, training opportunities focused on V.I., plans for collaboration on events, and outreach work to take performances to familiar spaces which may better serve the needs of BVI people.

P8 had been leading an inclusive recruitment drive at their organisation, which recruits and supports performers. P8 reflected on their goal of 'trying to open up the horizons to better represent the communities that we work with'. They had worked with BMF to identify BVI performers.

We can get to see what it's like to work with them [musicians with V.I.] and they can get to see what it's like with us (P8, Charity director)

It should be noted that whilst the initiatives discussed show progress towards access and inclusion within music and the arts, these activities have happened within organisations with stated inclusion goals. As P10 noted, at their organisation, access and inclusion 'is a priority overall, and I think it might be bigger than other organisations because I've never seen other organisations do as much as [organisation redacted] does'. Whilst BVI participants felt comfortable and welcomed in those environments where organisations have been invested in making positive change, long-term, wide-scale change appears limited. Indeed, one survey respondent with V.I. working in the industry reflected:

People are generally more open to diversity so there is residual benefit from that, but I do not see a specific movement benefitting people with visual impairment (Male, 39, Over 10 years in industry, with V.I.).

Figure 3. Satisfaction with access and inclusion in the music industry amongst blind and visually impaired respondents.

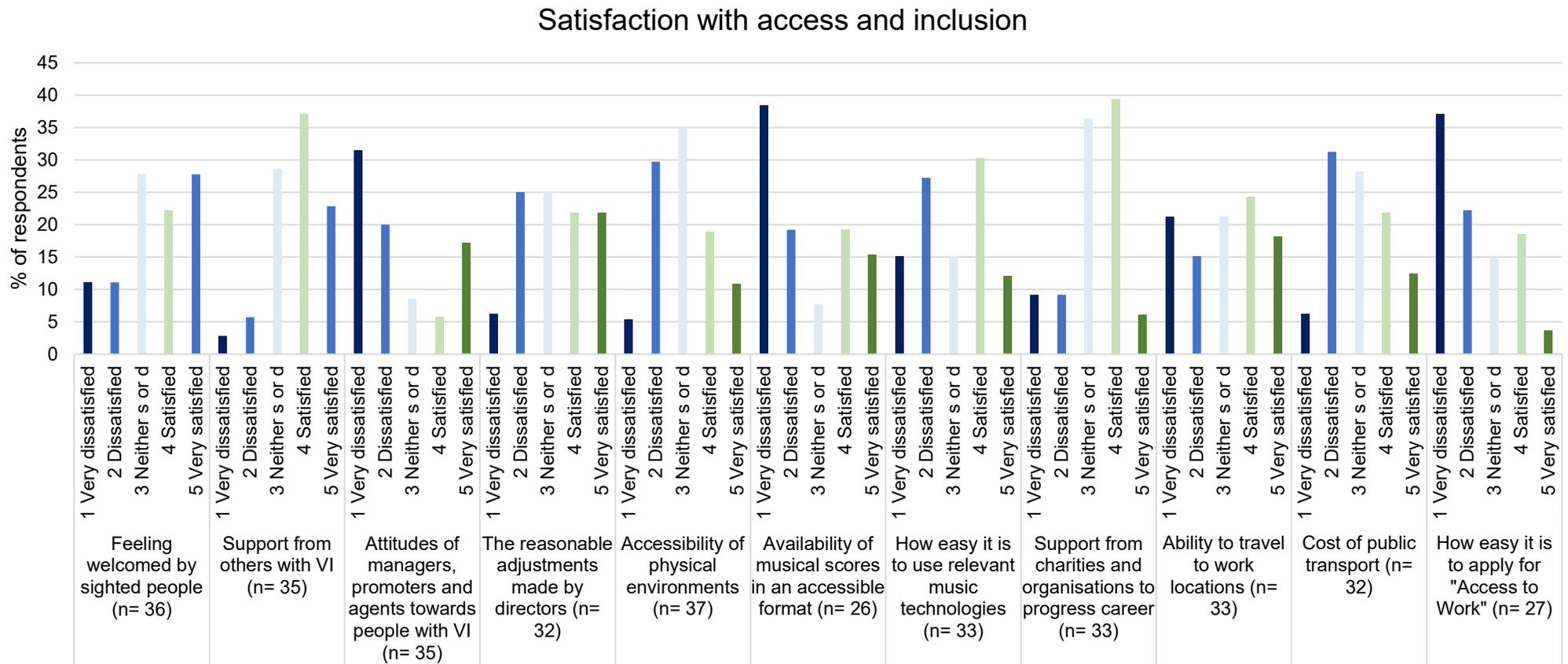
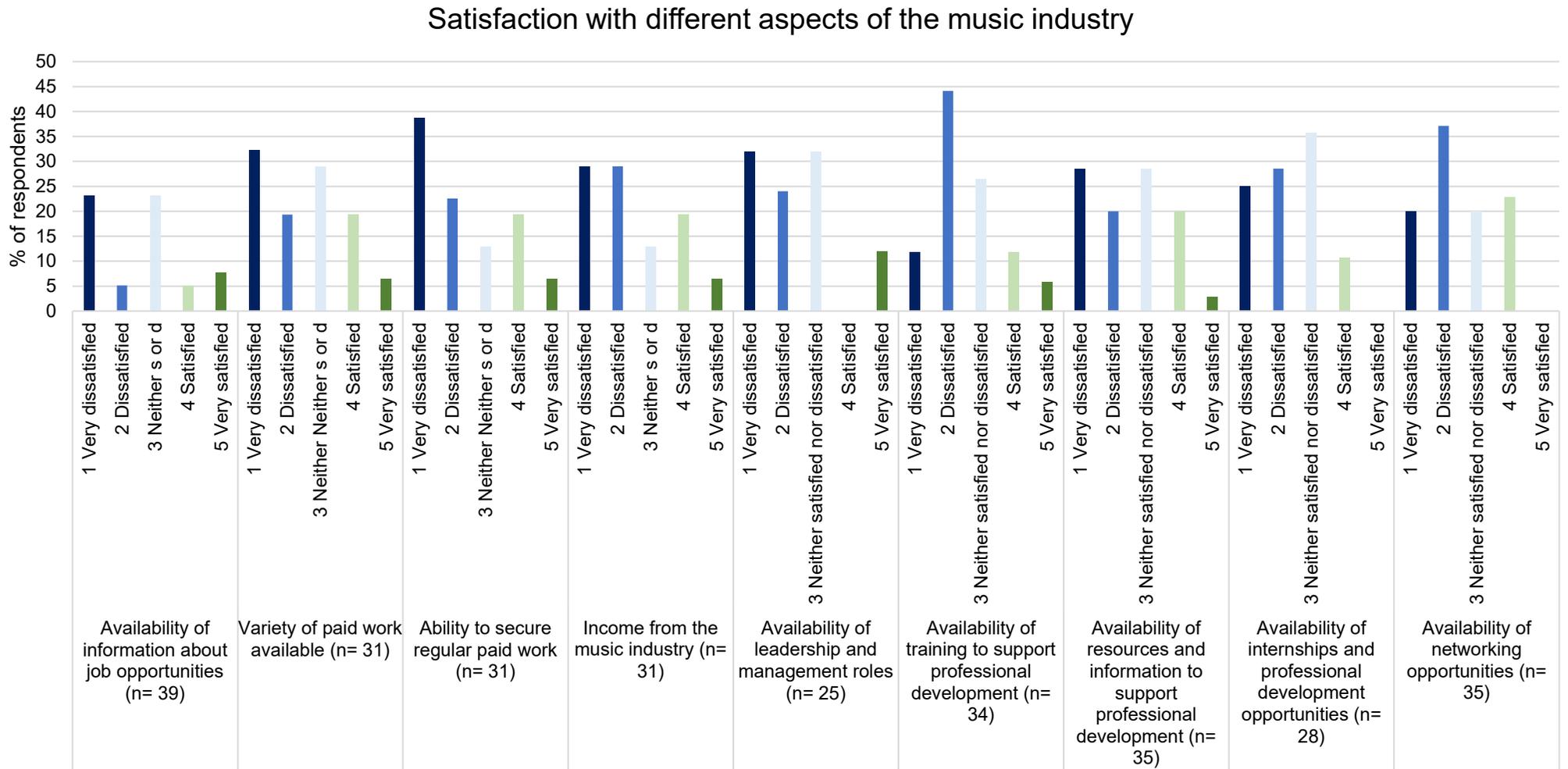


Figure 4. Satisfaction with different aspects of the music industry amongst blind and visually impaired respondents.



6 Attitudes towards visual impairment and invisible discrimination

Amongst the most common barrier to employment to be highlighted in the survey were those relating to the negative attitudes towards V.I., and an underestimation of the abilities of BVI people.

Assumptions that you can't do things as well as others (Female, 40, with V.I.)

People often bring incorrect or harmful preconceptions about VIB [Visually impaired or blind] folk (Male, 25, with V.I.)

During their interview, P5 reflected on the impact of invisible discrimination on employment opportunities, which may reflect a lack of trust in BVI professionals.

If you're discriminated against in any way, you know, people are not gonna do it openly. So, it might just be that you consistently don't get jobs that you would have got before, and because they're worried about something. And they'll make it into, 'oh no, it's not about that. It's about something else'. And I think that is something that I don't know what you can do about, you know, because that's gonna happen, that I'm sure that happens to lots of people for lots of different reasons (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

Participants who worked with children noted a perceived lack of trust from parents, institutions, and employers.

So, you know, being told on the one hand, you can't, you shouldn't be in charge of a room full of children. And then on the other hand, you should just be going and getting on with it. It felt like it was a real kind of contradiction in the expectations (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

I did not have any restrictions in terms of performance as a blind person, all the difficulties I faced are related to my teaching roles. Many institutions or managers think that being blind, I cannot teach. Also, parents sometimes do not like blind teachers to be their children's teacher. I cannot do anything to change that. You could be the best teacher in the world, but that does not count (Female, unknown age, with V.I.)

In contrast to the above respondent, another felt that performance was the primary area of employment disadvantage, something not felt in production roles.

I feel I've often been passed over for opportunities because I'm blind... I feel like I get a lot of respect in the studio and producers and sound engineers are always ready to hear my ideas and input but the same respect isn't extended to performing (Female, 37, with V.I.)

One interviewee, P2, noted that others may assume the presence of additional disabilities, 'I've had the altercation where someone has thought I have, you know, development issues... or they think that I'm like also deaf'. Assumptions made by

employers may have implications for the opportunities made available to BVI individuals if assumed additional needs are not well understood.

6.1 Sight loss and disclosing a visual impairment

The experience of sight loss may bring with it a unique set of challenges, relating to adaption to changing sight and relearning of everyday skills. However, as one interviewee, who had experienced a deterioration in sight during their twenties, it might also result in additional challenges relating to the attitudes of employers.

People don't understand even the slightest bit of what you're going through and kind of expect you just to be the same. I've I found it... a real challenge going back to the same places and what I've found is that, going to different places, if you're starting off as a visually impaired person and they know that from the outset, I found that easier than what people expected me to do in the same kind of workplaces (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

Perhaps counterintuitively, new environments and employers were easier to manage for P5 than familiar settings. One survey respondent, who worked in music management, also reflected on the challenge of losing their sight as a working-age adult. They highlighted difficulties around disclosing their impairment.

As a person with an acquired disability, I think one of the key areas to uncover is the journey of disclosure and how easy that is in an industry so fast and furious as the music industry. I personally found this very hard and wondered how I could ever be accepted, and spent 8 years hiding my disability, I am sure in other less frantic and competitive industries I might have worried a bit less about this. It's important we unpack how we can create environments for safe disclosure in music (Male, 39, with V.I.)

As the above respondents highlight, those working within the music industry must ensure that environments foster a sense of trust and openness, to ensure that BVI people feel comfortable disclosing their impairment and asking for support that might better enable their participation in the workplace.

7 Representation of visual impairment in the industry

7.1 Role models and leadership positions

Despite progress in access, and a growing focus on diversity and inclusion, participants reflected on a continued lack of representation of BVI people in the industry. This left BVI individuals without industry role models. The comments of Baluji highlighted the importance of seeing others with V.I. succeed in the industry to his own journey to pursue music as a career, 'If these people can do it, why can't I do it?... So I got. I got confidence from there'. P5, a musician, noted an increasing representation of diverse performers in the industry, but also a lack of representation in educational contexts.

I think you know in terms of role models and stuff, people on stage, I just think there's a lot more people on TV... you know, there's so many more people seeing themselves represented and I think that can only help more people go into music in the end... most people are non-disabled trying to learn about how to make their music workshops and stuff more accessible. And I just think until there's like lots of disabled people saying to other disabled children and young people that, 'come on you can do this, you can be a musician on stage, you can be whatever in music' there'll be some barriers... And then when there's more people around, the music industry has to kind of shift, doesn't it as well to kind of accommodate people (P5, Charity director, musician with V.I.)

Similarly, whilst P8 was working for an organisation actively seeking to increase diversity and inclusion within the industry, they felt that there remained a need to normalise V.I. in musical contexts.

I think the greater the visibility of the people with a visual impairment doing what they do and it not being something strange or novelty or you know, that would be that would be fantastic and becomes the norm, people aren't scared by it (P8, Charity director)

They also noted that even with this focus on diversification, the demographic diversity of both the organisation's staff and board of trustees was limited.

We don't have anybody with a disability represented on the board at the minute. That has been different in the past... I think the board is part of the nut to crack in terms of not even in terms of disability, but just in terms of change (P8, Charity director)

Survey responses confirmed that a lack of individuals with V.I., and other disability, in leadership roles was a concern.

The conversation about inclusion and accessibility is happening, as great initiatives like Paraorchestra and Inner Vision show. However, there isn't enough meaningful change. Not enough visually impaired people are in leadership positions to make a difference to the music industry (Male, 32, 6-

10 years in industry, with V.I.).

As highlighted by this survey respondent, representation of BVI people in decision-making roles could have a central role to play in implementing change in practise and policy relating to accessibility, inclusion, and diversity. Without the power to make “top-down” change from leadership positions, understanding of what changes are needed, and implementation of this change, may be limited. When asked about satisfaction with the availability of leadership and management roles, eight respondents (32%), were “Very dissatisfied”. This item received the second highest number of “Very dissatisfied” ratings of those listed ([Figure 4](#) and [Table 30](#), Appendix L), after the ability to secure regular work ($n= 12$, 38.71%).

7.2 Reframing perceptions of visual impairment through music

Representation of V.I. in the music industry is not only important for BVI people themselves, but also has wider implications on societal views of V.I., and disability more generally. Linda, who worked alongside BVI musicians, reflected on the role of music in reframing public perceptions of V.I.; musical workshops and events might provide opportunities for others to see BVI people working in music, which in turn may help to normalise V.I., and upend negative perceptions about V.I., particularly in relation to feelings of sympathy.

We've done workshops and just raising awareness through music about blindness, so some are just focused on music, some are focused on blindness, but with music to crack the ice and give a positive fun image rather than oh, poor, blind people sort of thing... And then inviting people to ask any questions. And don't be shy. Like, how do I talk to a blind person? How do I guide them? And all that sort of stuff, you know? (Linda, artist producer and manager of 'inclusive' ensemble)

Continuing on the theme of sympathy, Linda reflected on diversity in music, commenting that not only was a lack of awareness a barrier, but also ‘a feeling that this is about doing good deeds and it's not about making great music’.

7.3 Inclusion ‘agendas’

P3, a musician, also highlighted an awareness of the potential for tokenistic inclusion of BVI people, rather than real attempts to diversify the workplace. This belief was damaging to P3’s self-esteem.

Now that there is a lot of an agenda around inclusion, I find I do find sometimes I'm asked to be on things just because I can't see. Well, I can't prove that, but that makes you feel really rubbish too, because it's like you just want to know that you're doing a good job. You know, I don't wanna be hired because I can't see. That's rubbish, you just want to be booked

because you're good at what you do and people respect that rather than to be a token person (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

Survey respondents reflected similarly on the inclusion of BVI people in the workplace as a token gesture, as well as the perception of V.I. being less represented and supported than other types of disability.

[It's] important not to treat us as a 'trophy'- 'oh look we've got someone with disability'. In every system, visual impairment seems to be coming last (Female, 73, with V.I.)

I'm a singer who is blind, not a blind singer (Female, age unknown).

Reflecting this, multiple interviewees spoke about 'inclusion agendas', with a general sense that thus far, V.I. and other disabilities had been missing from the focus of such agendas.

There's, you know, black lives in music are in lots of different places, they're all over the place doing lots of things. So there's an issue about that. And there's an issue about LGBT+ awareness, trans awareness, there's a question about. You know all manner of, you know, wheelchair access... but actually there's something about visual impairment which is really missed, it's a missing area (P7, Venue representative)

There's still a lot about like LGBTQ inclusion and race inclusion, and you know, cultural inclusion. And I think those have been talked about for a lot longer than disability inclusion, and so I think they're not quite there, disability inclusion's like behind those (P5, Charity director, musician with V.I.)

Linda believed that in addition to tokenistic inclusion, there was a tendency to spotlight only those BVI musicians who demonstrate 'exceptional' skill or ability, 'you don't have to be exceptional if you're a sighted person to succeed in music, but you do have to be exceptional if you're a blind person in music'. These two narratives pervade discussions of disability in media and culture, drawing on negative stereotypes based upon either helplessness or pity, or the portrayal of individuals as inspirational due to their ability to overcome adversity. The latter relies on the individual exhibiting an ability that others might consider greater than what might be expected, based on negative assumptions about the abilities of individuals with disability. P8 felt that this type of portrayal had changing over time, although the challenges highlighted throughout interviews demonstrates that there remains progress to be made.

What's always been around in the past... you know, the novelty act of somebody who's visually impaired and they've been, you know, a fantastically gifted musician... but they've always been, not novelty acts, but do you know what I mean, they've been kind of highlighted because of their disability, and I suppose what I'm seeing more now is people are moving

towards this person is a great pianist and they happen to be sighted impaired. And I think that whole way that we talk about visual impairment or disability is really changing (P8, Charity director)

7.4 Mainstream and 'disability' arts

Participants reflected on experiences in 'mainstream' contexts as well as in relation to 'disability' arts and ensembles (whose members were primarily musicians with disability and/or neurodiversity). There were mixed feelings towards the latter. Two survey respondents felt that opportunities in disability arts remained their main or only source of work, in the absence of integration in mainstream environments.

I think there is slightly more awareness and willingness to accommodate than when I first started out, but I still think it's a challenge to be used for anything other than 'accessible / inclusion' work (Female, 40, Over 10 years in industry).

The work I've received has been through disabled charities etc... it feels like only disabled organisations know I exist. Have been approached by smaller opera company but only for a minor role, I didn't bother replying (Female, 43, Over 10 years in industry).

Interviewees reflected on the importance of ensembles targeted at musicians with V.I. or other disability in providing an inclusive musical spaces, raising awareness of their abilities, and providing essential performance opportunities.

The music director is very keen to understand the issues around each of us with the different disabilities, so of course, we allow each other extra time... some of them may take 20 extra seconds to absorb information because of their learning difficulties or because of our blindness, and if we kind of allow each other that sort of extra time, then many of those problems are resolved (P1, musician with V.I.)

I think that those kind of orchestras, or those performers have a really great role to play in terms of, like raising awareness and being kind of champions and advocates (P11, Venue representative, Head of Engagement and Participation)

P11 noted that organisations and ensembles specifically working to include and address the needs of people with V.I. and/or other disability are in a unique position to share best practise with other organisations and initiatives, 'I think there has a kind of advocacy role, and also kind of learning and development role of how we can all become more inclusive and become more aware'. However, there was also acknowledgement that these ought not to be the only spaces available to these performers.

There are different ways you can approach it and you have to do all of them. One, which is something like really targeted like something like the Paraorchestra where all the musicians are disabled and that's a really clear statement and that's very much part of their story. But then other ways should be, you know, just really great musicians just happen to have a disability that isn't necessarily part of, you know, isn't necessarily so overtly talked about, but that would just be normal, that we would have those people in our building and that would just be part of the day-to-day (P11, Venue representative, Head of Engagement and Participation)

P3 felt that integration into mainstream music contexts may not always be viable, nor preferable. In the context of orchestras, for example, 'You are not ever going to make it possible for a musician with a visual impairment who needs to learn all their music to take up a full-time orchestral chair.' Yet, P3 also reflected on the challenge that associations with 'disability' arts may bring for BVI musicians.

I think there is a feeling amongst those musicians that that once you get known as a disabled ensemble, actually it can damage your, it can damage your standing in the mainstream rather than enhance it... It can be a double-edged thing (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

These ensembles might offer the flexibility required for successful and enjoyable participation in music-making, but may make it more difficult to establish oneself within mainstream music scenes.

I'm hoping that with [names of organisations removed] and all of these things that we're not going into silos of, these are disabled musicians playing music, you know, but actually this is more like, OK, how do we get those musicians into, for want of a better word, mainstream professional settings... and I think that's kind of the next thing that needs to happen, isn't it... how do you include someone in the main offer? (P8, Charity director)

As P8 highlights, with the existence of such ensembles, it is important not to assume that their members' 'needs have been met. We don't need to do anything else'.

8 Access to opportunities and professional development

8.1 Satisfaction with opportunities and employment

Respondents were asked to rate satisfaction with various aspects of the music industry, including the opportunities available to them, and regularity of work ([Figure 4](#) and [Table 30](#), Appendix L). Those items which received the greatest number of “Very dissatisfied” responses were the ability to secure regular work ($n= 12$, 38.71%) and the variety of paid work available to them ($n= 10$, 32.26%).

8.2 Support for professional development in music

BVI respondents were asked if they had received support, opportunities, or funding from various sources to help them progress in their career. The most common response was that respondents had not received any such support ($n= 18$, 40.91%). Of those sources accessed, the most common were IVO ($n= 8$, 18.18%), British Paraorchestra ($n= 8$, 18.18) and the Arts Council ($n= 7$, 15.91%) ([Table 16](#), Appendix G). Respondents were also asked to reflect on their satisfaction with careers support, which received mixed responses ([Table 33](#), Appendix M). Most ($n= 11$, 25%) rated satisfaction at 3 out of 5 (“Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”), although almost twice as many people were “Very dissatisfied/Dissatisfied” ($n= 13$, 29.55%) than the number who were “Very Satisfied/Satisfied” ($n= 7$, 15.91%). 29.55% reported that this question was “Not applicable”, which could reflect a lack of career support provided.

Similarly, when asked to rate satisfaction with different aspects of the industry ([Figure 4](#) and [Table 30](#), Appendix L), the availability of training to support professional development received the greater number of “Dissatisfied” responses ($n= 15$, 44.12%), followed by the availability of networking opportunities ($n= 8$, 37.14%). No respondents reported being “Very satisfied” with the availability of internships or professional development opportunities; the majority reported that the latter was “Not applicable” to them, which may indicate low engagement in professional development activities amongst respondents. A majority of respondents were “Satisfied” with support received from charities and organisations to progress their career ($n= 13$, 39.39), although this may reflect the recruitment of BVI professionals via organisations such as BMF, who provide support in this area.

8.2.1 Careers advice

An overview of themes from open-ended survey responses about careers advice is provided in [Table 34](#) (Appendix M). Six respondents commented that no advice or very little advice had ever been received. Others reported discouragement from parents to pursue music and focus on a ‘proper’ (Female, 43, with V.I.) or more ‘sensible’ (Female, 34, with V.I.) job, with one respondent describing how music

had been viewed as a 'gimmick' at school (Male, 66, V.I.). One respondent reported insufficient understanding of the job market and potential careers in music from advisors, reflecting on their focus on performance as the only, and unlikely, potential musical pathway.

Back in the 1990s, a career in musical performance (little else was ever talked about or considered) was not seen as viable. Not enough consideration was given to the fact that a career in music could take many different forms (Male, 45, with V.I.).

One participant reported being discouraged from pursuing music due to their VI, and another that a lack of careers advice tailored to their needs as a performer with V.I. had left them without a support network when they experienced difficulties.

Told that music wasn't a career option and then told it would be very difficult to pursue following sight loss diagnosis (Female, 40, with V.I.).

When I was training in singing growing up, I wanted to make this my career. However, nobody knew anything about blind people not being easily accepted into the disciplines I wanted to learn, so I applied for talent shows and other programmes thinking I would be as accepted as my sighted peers. This wasn't the case and I know I was passed over for certain opportunities due to being blind. Had I learned more about the reality of these things and where to get support from, I would have gone about music differently (Female, 37, with V.I.).

Two respondents, who had studied music in Higher Education, reflected on the benefits of their course to professional development opportunities through a course module, and a year in industry, respectively. Although, interviewee P2 noted that, whilst careers advice had been available at university during their music degree, they 'didn't really engage with it, I think that's maybe my fault and not theirs'. They also felt that their degree itself had provided few skills of use to a career in music.

You wanna be a lecturer or teacher or something then absolutely do one [music degree], but not if you wanna be a professional musician. If you wanna be professional musician, just get out start doing it (P2, "semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, practical experience was considered a central factor in the development of a successful career as a performing musician. Indeed, when asked what advice they would give others entering the industry, two survey respondents highlighted the importance of practical experience, with one advising others to 'take anything to get you on the bottom rung of a ladder'. However, as highlighted elsewhere, opportunities to gain this practical experience was cited as a barrier.

8.2.2 Peer support

Interview participants highlighted the importance of peer support to BVI professionals in music. As a teacher, P3 reflected on the benefits of observing and learning from peers and felt that establishing a network of teachers working in a similar field would be useful for sharing best practice.

We could share experience and share expertise, and things that we have found that work and things that we have found that don't, and we can ask questions, and "who finds this helpful?, or "what do I do?", "I've got a student doing this". It's just a colleague's network. We all work on our own too much... I think there's a bank of wisdom where we're all reinventing the wheel several times over and could actually help one another... I think most of us are freelance, many of them are sighted teachers who have taken up visually impaired students, sometimes with additional learning needs (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

When asked to rate satisfaction with support received from others with V.I. in the industry, the most common response was that respondents were "Satisfied", with 13 out of 35 respondents (37.14%) providing this response, and a further eight reporting being "Very satisfied" (22.86%). However, participants reflected on difficulties accessing peer support. For example, as someone who experienced sight loss during their working life, P5 had struggled to find anyone who shared similar experiences of VI working in music who might be able to offer insight and support relating to career navigation.

I think it would be nice to have like a network of people, a sort of support group of people doing the same stuff as you... I think with sight loss, it's hard enough to find people, even that are at your age, I knew a lot of people that had always lived without sight or I'd go to a group and it would be full of 80-year-olds... that's really isolating in itself, and so, as a young mother who's experiencing sight loss and who is a musician, it was just very hard to find anyone that I could remotely relate to... you just sometimes want someone who's like, similar to you, don't you? Talk about challenges or how you've kind of overcome them (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

When asked to reflect on advice for other BVI professionals, or those hoping to enter the music industry, multiple survey respondents ($n=6$) pointed to the value of peer support but again, the challenge of locating such support was also noted.

*Reach out to others who are visually impaired (can be hard to find!)
(Female, 40, with V.I.).*

Search the internet for other blind and partially sighted musicians. It may take some persistence, but they are out there (Female, 34, with V.I.).

8.2.3 Organisations working with blind and visually impaired musicians

Musicians and industry representatives highlighted various organisations, initiatives and project which had provided support relating to musical life and professional development. This included general careers support provided by the RNIB (e.g., interview technique, CV development, career mentorship), RNIB workshops which had provided opportunities to connect with other musicians, projects such as South Bank Centre's Busking Scheme (working alongside BMF to increase access to busking opportunities through licensing of BVI musicians) and Live Music Now (also working alongside BMF to identify and develop musicians for future performance opportunities), and BMF itself.

8.2.3.1 Ensuring success for blind and visually impaired musicians in targeted initiatives

Outcomes from the busking collaboration have been the licencing of several BVI musicians, and as P10 reflected, 'Linda says that like they seem a little bit more confident about themselves performing in front of audiences'. P8 reflected similarly on the hope that BVI musicians engaged with Live Music Now would 'have the confidence and skills to kind of go out on their own and do it... so that their work doesn't really differ from any other musician on the scheme'. P8 emphasised the importance of adapting to the needs of these musicians to enable participation, including offering an alternative to the usual audition process.

We need to make sure the musicians have the same quality as the other musicians on the scheme... so quite a lot of our of our work at the minute is, how do we find those musicians... and how do we get the best out of them so they can show that they can do that... so it might have been that it used to be in a 20 minute audition and now it's kind of morphed into this 4 hour workshop, and actually now it's morphed into a 12 month project. So, we can really see and let those musicians bed in and kind of get to grips with what they're doing and then we can see them at their full potential over a period of time (P8, Charity director)

Essential to this work was making information and training accessible to BVI musicians. Speaking about an induction session, P8 commented:

Not relying on a PowerPoint in an induction presentation, and relying on all of these things that we just take for granted... it was really... not challenging, but it was made us think in a very different way... we had long conversations before about how we're going to run this, how we're going to make sure they can fully engage with them and we can make sure they're heard in that space (P8, Charity director)

Others also reflected on approaches to ensure inclusion of BVI musicians in their work. P10, involved in Southbank Centre's busking scheme, reflected on actions as simple as providing additional time in auditions, set aside for open discussion of needs between individual and organisation (and support worker, where relevant), and the provision of regular set busking times and locations.

We try to kind of like be very hands on, communication with the artists and trying to find solutions because we don't believe in everybody receiving the same treatment but rather than receiving the treatment that they require in order to address the need (P10, Performing arts manager)

As highlighted by P10, organisations and individuals within the music industry must focus on equal opportunity in order to ensure inclusion, rather than equal treatment, which may well put BVI professionals at a disadvantage.

P8 acknowledged the challenge of working to address the needs of performers who may have widely varying needs, particularly when working in small-scale organisations where staff and resource may be limited but, as P1 highlights below, accommodating someone with V.I. may be as simple as affording a little extra time to complete tasks.

I think first of all, whatever we do, musical work or non-musical work or anything else, it is common, if they managed to understand that, often it takes time for us to do the things... if they allow us that extra time, it's not always an extra few weeks, sometimes an extra few seconds. I'm talking about that sort of thing. If they started understanding that then I think many, many more possibilities would arise (P1, musician with V.I.)

8.2.3.2 Limitations of support for blind and visually impaired people working in music

Whilst sight loss organisations were the source of employment support and networking opportunities, Linda felt there were limitations in the practical support they were willing to provide.

Guide Dogs won't give you a volunteer if you're busking because you mustn't use the volunteer to help you handle money... I think it's Travel Hands, or there's Blind Aid, they'll help you buy food, but they won't help you buy clothes because that's seen as recreational, so only help you with essential things... anything that's considered recreational or cosmetic, well, can you imagine? How are you supposed to develop an image if you if you can't get help to do that (Linda, artist producer and manager of 'inclusive' ensemble)

Undoubtedly, the development of a musicians' image may be integral to their success, as well as their confidence. Speaking about the work of BMF, Linda emphasised the importance of providing multifaceted support to BVI musicians, which not only developed musical skills, but also skills relating to independence, confidence, communication, and visual aspects of performance and promotion.

When we did our first national tour... that was for them a learning experience, how to be stage ready? How to communicate with the staff at venues, with sound engineers, how you don't talk on your phone or through

the performance on the stage, how not to hit the microphone all the time because you can't see it, the kind of language you use to communicate your needs to the venue staff... there is a lot of hanging around, getting used to that, like realising that that's not just for them, that's for everybody, and developing the confidence to talk to the audiences... to be presentable to audiences. I remember when we did our first photo shoot, for example, one of the musicians... didn't bring his instrument for the yeah, he didn't understand that that is what photoshoots are about (Linda, artist producer and manager of 'inclusive' ensemble)

8.3 Finding work

Respondents were asked how they found out about potential work opportunities (Table 35, Appendix M). Over half ($n= 25$, 56.82%) found out about opportunities word-of-mouth, followed by information from a disability-focused organisation or charity ($n= 15$, 34.09%) and online searching ($n= 12$, 27.27%). Just four reported using an agency, and two a manager. Open-ended survey responses and interviews highlighted that firstly, there may be a lack of accessible information about potential work opportunities for BVI professionals, and secondly, that finding management or representation with an agent could be difficult.

OK, so finding the job for teaching and performing, it's so difficult because I am blind. I think I tend to have a lack of information most of the time. Even if there are some advertisements on the street, I couldn't see... and if there was some information on the internet, much of this information is visual-based, so it's very difficult to access (P1, musician with V.I.)

Reflecting on their experiences working with BVI musicians, Linda commented that finding an agent had, thus far, been an impossible task for one musician, 'We've asked so many people and it just hasn't happened'. Without consultation with agents and managers, it is difficult to pinpoint the reasons that finding representation as an industry professional with V.I. may be difficult, and even then, the impacts of invisible discrimination may be difficult to identify.

8.3.1 Networking

When asked if there were any musical opportunities that survey respondents felt unable to take part in over the last 12 months and why this was, the most common issues raised were not having enough industry connections or having networking difficulties, mentioned by six out of 28 respondents. Furthermore, most respondents were dissatisfied with the availability of networking opportunities. Ratings for this statement from 35 respondents are listed below.

- Very dissatisfied – 7 (20%)
- Dissatisfied – 13 (37.14%)

- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – 8 (22.86%)
- Satisfied – 8 (22.86%)
- Very satisfied - 0
- Prefer not to say - 0
- Not applicable - 4

Interviews highlighted that, as is the case for many musicians, networking played an important role in securing work and developing a career. P2 reflected on the fact that most of their paid performance work came about through contacts made at previous work.

For like weddings... I make a habit whenever I visit another Church of going and speaking to the pastor and going to speaking to the press coordinator, introducing myself. I just speak to as many people as possible... I'm playing a wedding at the end of this month and the bride is a bridesmaid from a wedding I played last year (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

P2 was proactive in their approach to meeting others, noting that their networking abilities had been honed over time during participation in music and gigging, rather than through their formal music education.

My music degree... the stuff I learned, you know, from my lectures and then my seminars did not help me necessarily get gigs or be good at gigs, what helped me in my degree in terms of gigging was going out all the time, meeting lots of friends, jamming all the time with musicians and learning how to cooperate musically with people... that sort of community of music is what prepared me for gigs (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

Networking experiences early in their career had been of great importance to P2, but others reflected on networking as a major challenge. Open-ended survey responses and interviewee comments highlighted difficulties such as a lack of networking opportunities and practical limitations on maintaining networks of colleagues.

Networking, which is difficult for blind people (Baluji, Founder of IVO)

Lack of networking events (Male, 32, with V.I.).

Once you're in the industry, it's hard to stay in touch with people who you've worked with- different networking but also different because they can drive, people reach out to others more than they do to me (Female, 43, with V.I.).

Factors relating to self-confidence were also evident. As P2's comments above highlight, a proactive approach to connecting with others is important, which is inevitably more difficult for someone lacking confidence.

Found networking opportunities hard, not very good at promoting myself. I'm not shy. I don't know if that's my VI or personality (Male, 66, with V.I.).

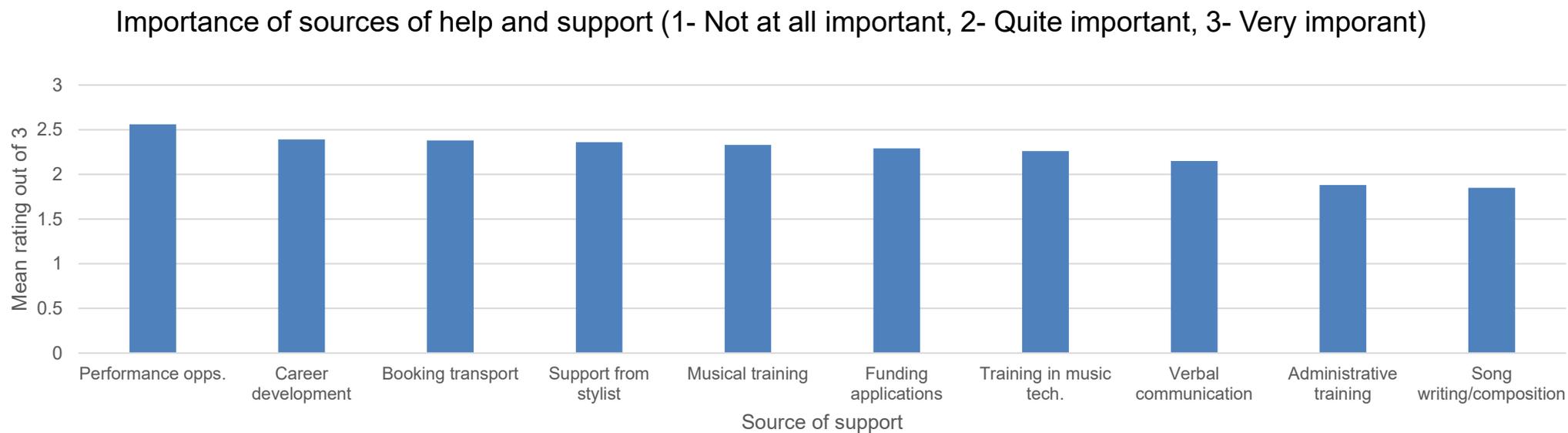
Linda felt that active encouragement of interactions between BVI performers and audience members could help to overcome this challenge, providing opportunities to network for those who might otherwise struggle to do so, connect with audience members socially, and identify work opportunities.

It's very good if after the performance people can come up and talk to the performers... obviously they can't see the audience, they can hear the response of the audience... sighted musicians often network after a gig, you know somebody would come up and say, oh, that was really good, can I buy you a drink or whatever, you might get future work from those networking situations... that really helps to create that extra benefit so that people can develop their own performing networks and contacts (Linda, artist producer and manager of 'inclusive' ensemble)

8.4 Importance of different types of support or training

Respondents were asked to rate how important a list of sources of help and support would be to them. The majority felt that several items were "Very important", highlighting the variety of support sought ([Table 36](#), Appendix M). More performance opportunities ($n= 22$), help with booking transport ($n= 20$), career development support ($n= 19$), and support from a stylist ($n= 19$) received the greatest number of "Very important" ratings and highest mean ratings ([Figure 5](#) and [Table 37](#), Appendix M). The items which received the greatest number of 'Not at all important' responses were training in song writing/composition ($n= 16$), administrative training ($n= 14$), and support to develop verbal communication skills ($n= 10$). Suggestions for support in open-ended responses included assistance with the Access to Work scheme, greater disability awareness training for others, skill development (e.g., how to run workshops), career progress support (e.g., funding for training, support for networking), and PA support (e.g., administrative assistance and navigational support at venues).

Figure 5. Mean ratings of the importance of different sources of help and support for blind and visually impaired respondents.



9 Access to work scheme and workplace accommodations

9.1 Access to Work

Amongst survey respondents, the item relating to how easy it is to apply for the "Access to Work" received the greatest proportion of "Very dissatisfied" responses ($n= 10$, 38.46%) along with the availability of musical scores in an accessible format ($n= 10$, 37.04%). Interviewee's experiences with the scheme were mixed. There were several reports of positive outcomes, including the use of Access to Work to access technology, and advice, and as highlighted above, personal assistance and funding towards music transcription.

I've always found the Access to Work actual advisors really helpful in terms of recommending stuff that I wouldn't know that I could access (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

Another valuable thing I have now is a braille display which I got from Access to Work (P1, musician with V.I.)

However, interviewees also highlighted challenges relating to the scheme, including wait times and the time required to set-up support, the need to claim back expenses (leaving employees out of pocket), and of particular concern, inaccessible forms.

The one negative thing is that I have to pay everything out because I'm freelance. So, for example, the support worker because they sometimes have to do musical things, they're normally a musician, and they get paid about £25 an hour, and I get allocated like 10 hours a week, so that's £250 a week that I have to find to pay out... you don't want them to be losing out before you get your work before you get paid... and with the taxis as well, which is quite expensive... also the forms aren't accessible, so I have to get someone else to fill in the forms to claim it back for me (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

I knew about Access to Work and stuff, but getting it set up takes time (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

It's so difficult to apply... if I'm taking up the job and tried to apply for the fund and contacted Access to Work... after completing the online application, for example, they would say someone from the team would contact me in eighteen weeks or something (P1, musician with V.I.)

P1 noted that as a freelance worker, prerequisites for claiming support from Access to Work could make it difficult to access this support.

Unless we are making the turnover above the threshold they created based on the lower earning limit, which is £6000 and several hundred pounds per year, then they may help us for the first year, and maybe a second year as well, but if we couldn't pass that threshold for third year, then we could be disqualified from, you know, applying for Access to Work fund for five years

since the initial application... which could be very easily happening because of COVID and other difficulties, all the self-employed people are struggling (P1, musician with V.I.)

Musicians, whose work may be ad-hoc or project based, may be significantly impacted by restrictions on access to support based on annual income. Furthermore, P5 highlighted that people employed in music, particularly in freelance roles, may not always know how Access to Work relates to them.

So it's that kind of and practical like, is there financial support for working as a musician? Because I think lots of people think Access to Work isn't for freelancers, and that's the impression I get (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

Information regarding the potential applicability of Access to Work support to the work of musicians, particularly freelance workers, may be valuable amongst BVI people working in music.

9.2 Adaptations and workplace accommodations

9.2.1 Work patterns

Interviewees highlighted the often ad-hoc nature of work in music, and their experiences of working freelance. As highlighted above, this created challenges for P1 in relation to Access to Work, whilst P2 reflected on the lack of financial security which might be offered by this type of employment.

A big part of my thinking was like future proofing, right? Like I sort of made the decision at that time [not to pursue musical performance full time]. Like what I really want is a family and a house and to settle and doing music full time doesn't really lend itself to that kind of thing... that kind of like uncertain, self-employed environment, you know combined with, you know, dependants and a mortgage which stress me out, and also because we were during COVID times, right, so all the people who were self-employed, full time musicians suddenly had no work and were struggling because they weren't getting furloughed either... it didn't seem particularly appealing, you know? (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

Survey respondents highlighted, similarly, the financial insecurity associated with a career in music.

I don't regret having been a musician at all, even though I've not been able to live from it entirely, which is something I wanted to do at one point. It's precarious (Male, 66, with V.I.).

I don't want fame, but I really wish music could be my main income (Female, 37, with V.I.)

Although, this challenge is not unique to BVI professionals. As P3 noted, 'I think

there's always a bit of a fear about going into a music career because you know it's not a stable way of earning a living, actually for most people, sighted or not, it can be precarious'. In contrast, the flexibility of work in music was a benefit to P5 and their needs as both a professional with V.I., and someone with a busy home life.

I think working regularly for an organisation would be easier, but because I had to kind of a variety of negative experiences, going back to the organisations that I maybe worked for before, I find freelance much more suited to me because I can pick and choose as I will get really exhausted from concentrating on seeing all the time... it kind of works for me and my family basically because I'm a bit more in control of the hours (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

9.2.2 Asking for help and speaking up

Whilst there is work being done across many organisations to find flexible and adaptive approaches to working with people with V.I. and other disabilities, some BVI interviewees reflected on concerns about asking for help at work, and speaking up when needs were not met. Linda felt that BVI people often felt reluctant to express their needs for fear of losing out on opportunities.

There's this feeling that if you make a fuss then people will be even less inclined to help you... if you're blind and you feel as though you've been side-lined, blind people feel that if they shout out people will think, ohh they're just a nuisance, you know. We don't want to have anything do with them (Linda, artist producer and manager of 'inclusive' ensemble)

Illustrating this, Baluji reflected on a request they had made for alternative accommodation when the accommodation provided had been during one work trip unsuitable (e.g., low ceilings which were difficult to navigate with a V.I.), and the impact they felt this had had on future opportunities.

I said, 'look, I want to stay in the hotel.' and they gave me hotel room. But after that I didn't get any job from them (Baluji, Founder of IVO)

Linda suggested that whilst individuals working in the industry might 'talk about how angry they are' about a lack of opportunities or discriminatory behaviours, 'they don't actually shout out'. Once again, this could reflect fear, at further loss of opportunity, but also a lack of confidence in speaking about one's needs and expectations of employers, a feeling of not being advocated for, or a lack of knowledge of how to request support from external organisations or schemes such as Access to Work. In contrast, P5 noted that they felt able to communicate their needs to others well, but that it was also the responsibility of sighted others to find out how they can help.

I'm quite confident in being able to ask and articulate my needs, but I don't think I should have to. I think you know, I'd much rather other people ask if there's anything that they can do or adapt (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

As one survey respondent highlighted, there is need for a general greater understanding amongst employers of how the needs of BVI people can be addressed.

Employers in the industry lack awareness of reasonable adjustments for blind musicians, as a result of this they often consider them unable to fit in (Male, 38, with V.I.)

The need for open communication between individual and employer (or recruiter, commissioner etc.) about what needs exist for the individual, and how these might be addressed, is apparent.

Understand that reasonable adjustment is a two-way street, and the people you are working with may never have worked with a blind person before, so don't expect them to be an expert (Female, age unknown, with V.I.)

As highlighted above, it is important for BVI people to communicate their access needs clearly, and take a proactive approach to ensure these needs are met; the individual themselves is, after all, the 'expert' in their needs and experiences:

10 Technology

Around a third of BVI survey respondents were “Satisfied” with how easy it is to use music technologies relevant to their roles and activities ($n= 10, 30.30\%$). However, nearly a third were “Dissatisfied” ($n= 9, 27.27\%$) and a further 5 “Very dissatisfied” ($n= 5, 15.15\%$) (Table 29, Appendix L). Open-ended survey responses about technology use indicated that whilst there were obvious the positive impacts of technology on musical participation, the costs associated with technological engagement were a barrier to its use. Both these themes were the most common, mentioned 11 times in responses from 32 respondents (Table 32, Appendix L).

Technology opens up a world of opportunity for composition, performance, production and so on, it's great we do have access to many products and many functions of some products are accessible; however, other products remain a closed box we cannot open because of mouse use, no screen reader support and so on (Male, 49, with V.I.)

I use Good Feel as a software to learn my piano pieces, it is very useful to me though very expensive (Female, unknown age, with V.I.)

Accessing technological training was also a challenge. Participants reflected on the difficulty of identifying individuals to provide support, finding accessible resources, and the costs associated with technological upskilling.

I can't find anyone to train or help me with any music technology (Female, 54, with V.I.)

I have found it hard to find accessible training materials or individuals willing and able to provide tuition and training. Where these are available, I do not qualify for financial assistance to pay for these, so have had to prioritise what I spend (Male, 45, with V.I.)

P2 reflected on the value of accessing peer support through online communities.

I've had a lot of support technology-wise over the past years, in particular from a couple of WhatsApp groups that are sort of focused around music technology and VIB experience... you basically can put a question in the group but then there are lots of really knowledgeable, experienced people there who will help you fix whatever issue you're having (P2, “Semi-professional” pianist with V.I.)

P2 also highlighted the ad-hoc means with which BVI individuals often access technology, ‘it's sort of this really ragtag ecosystem of stuff that is really prone to breaking and collapsing’. With a reliance on individuals producing solutions, rather than developers themselves, it is perhaps unsurprising that these solutions struggle to keep pace with rapidly evolving technology.

I updated my MacBook to OS Ventura earlier in the year and then like one of my main software platforms was no longer accessible. So I had to then

wipe my hard drive and downgrade back to the old OS... that's a really common thing to come across (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

P5 also reflected on inaccessible software, noting incompatibility issues when using some Apps with accessibility settings enabled.

Because I work now in inclusive and accessible music, obviously people have lots of different needs... what I've found is that on all the inclusive instruments and like iPad instruments and stuff, the visually impaired settings for the iPad contradict with the apps, so I can't use or set up any of the apps that people will need that I'm working with (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

Speaking about ThumbJam, for example, P5 observed that whilst an invaluable tool for people with limited cognitive or physical ability, 'if you've got settings like mine which are like the Zoom setting and the large text setting, then it just doesn't really work and so they contradict each other'. Whilst supposedly, these Apps offer accessibility for users with disability, there is progress still to be made in ensuring their usability for BVI people, with obvious implications for teachers who have VI. This also appears to be the case for technology used in production contexts, which are often inherently visual.

Things related to visualization is a pretty big one... how do we make an EQ interface like a spectrogram, how do you make that accessible... one of the suggestions we made was haptics (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

Ongoing research in the UK ([Bridging the Gap 2021 | Performance Without Barriers](#)) seeks to address access barriers in the context of music production, but the lead-time for identifying solutions and developing or adapting technologies, means that BVI people engaged in production, or hoping to pursue work in field, continue to be disadvantaged.

10.1 Social media

Social media has provided many individuals, who might otherwise struggle to promote themselves, a public platform, but this becomes another area in which BVI people might be disadvantaged if they do not have the ability to engage with social media.

Reliance on visual social media such as Instagram and TikTok makes it hard to sell yourself (Female, 40, Over 10 years in industry, has a V.I.)

In some ways the access to the music industry has been democratised with social media, however, social media in itself also presents barriers to VI artists, you need to be tech aware and even if you are, there are many aspects to social media that still require 20/20 vision to use it to its optimal level to promote your music (Female, 36, over 10 years in industry, has a V.I.)

difficulties with social media might reflect a lack of skill or technological confidence, a lack of training or support, and the visual nature of many social media platforms.

Advertising on social media is a very visual thing- I couldn't find someone to support me during COVID to go online- it's hard to find people who are technically minded with sight to help you access those things (Female, 43, with V.I.).

P2 noted that as someone who had chosen not to pursue a full-time career in performance, there had been no need to promote themselves on social media. Still, they reflected on the inaccessibility of platforms and concerns regarding their online "image".

P2: I did make like social media, but I'm not very good at engaging with social media.

Interviewer: OK. Is there a reason for that? Or do you just not like it?

*P2: I mean I probably could say that it's a nightmare to deal with in terms of accessibility, which it is and like aesthetically, I would be quite anxious about that. Like, you know, making sure photographs are taken properly and making sure, like colour schemes are sort of balanced, like that would make me quite anxious. But I could get someone else to do that all for me, you know. But I think as well, yeah, I just don't like it, *laughter* if I am being honest.*

11 Venues and other work environments

Survey results showed that many respondents were not satisfied with the accessibility of workplaces. Of all items listed, the accessibility of physical environments that respondents worked in or visited received the highest proportion of “Dissatisfied” responses (11 out of 37, 29.73%) ([Figure 3](#) and [Table 29](#), Appendix L). A further 2 (5.41%) were “Very dissatisfied”. For individuals working in the music industry, particularly given the incidence of freelance and peripatetic roles which require travel to unfamiliar locations, the inaccessibility of built spaces may be of even greater significance than for those working in other industries.

The inside of the venue can be as problematic if I'm unfamiliar with it (P2, “Semi-professional” pianist with V.I.)

As with wider issues of diversity and inclusion, there were reflections on improvements in venue accessibility over time, and acknowledgement of the role of organisations such as Attitude is Everything in instigating change.

*Venues are much more aware of people's access needs... Attitude is Everything has done a great job of trying to get venues to sign up to the charter and everything... there's more awareness amongst staff. Still, think it can probably be better *laughter*, there's a long way to go but I think it's definitely shifted for the better (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)*

However, there remained concerns regarding the perception of these spaces as somewhere that people with V.I. or other disability ‘feel that they're welcome’ (P7, Venue representative). P7 acknowledged that considerations of accessibility ought not only be of relevance to audience members and the community, but any individual who might use these spaces, including staff and visiting performers.

In terms of us being customer-facing, or more visitor-facing, I'm conscious of the fact that we need to wrap in everybody, from an artist to an audience member, you know any visitor, that we know firstly how to welcome somebody coming in, and that's sending information in advance that is useful, but also, just knowing that when they're on site that they can be looked after in the best way possible (P7, Venue representative)

A proactive and pre-emptive approach to addressing venue and workplace accessibility is needed to ensure that the needs of all visitors, regardless of disability, are met. A lack of staff awareness is likely a significant barrier to improving access and inclusion within these spaces. This is undoubtedly a circular process, whereby an actual or perceived lack of accessibility results in a lack of BVI visitors, meaning that venues and staff are not required to think about adaptations for this group, and thus, the space remains inaccessible. As P7 noted, ‘We don't deal with it [visits from individuals with V.I.] on a regular enough basis to actually just think, ‘oh it's second nature on these things’.

11.1 Travelling to and from venues

- Of 33 respondents, the greatest proportion were “Satisfied” with their ability to travel to work locations ($n= 8$, 24.24%). Although, responses were mixed, and nearly as many reported being “Very dissatisfied” with this aspect of accessibility ($n= 7$, 21.21%) ([Table 29](#), Appendix L).
- Respondents were less satisfied with the cost of public transport. Nearly a third of 32 respondents ($n= 10$, 31.25%) were ‘Dissatisfied’ with these costs.

Participants highlighted the challenges of securing transport as a non-driver, costs of public transport and taxis, and the impact of this on the feasibility of work.

I am either reliant on other people driving me, public transport, or being able to get there on foot... If I wanted to go to somewhere like [place names removed] for example, there's no way of me to get there independently unless I want to pay a lot of money for a taxi... I could sort of factor that into my bill, for example, but then I'm increasing my prices and that makes me less desirable, less competitive, you know, so that then I have to sort of ask other people if they can drive me (P2, “Semi-professional” pianist with V.I.)

Taxis charge far too much, when arranging a fee for performances hirers are often not sympathetic about covering that cost of transport...

Accessibility of venues is often a problem- attended a venue to perform and it had stairs and no rail (Female, 43, with V.I.)

There were also practical considerations to be made when travelling with instruments and equipment. P2 reflected that this logistical planning was a greater consideration than musical interest or fulfilment when choosing jobs.

I always try to pick gigs where the venue already has a piano, because bringing a keyboard with me, whilst doable, is kind of a nightmare... It's trying to pick gigs that will accommodate me the best rather than pick gigs that perhaps would satisfy me musically (P2, “Semi-professional” pianist with V.I.)

11.2 Finding venues and entrances

Locating venues was difficult for some. P2 and P1 highlighted the limitations of technology to provide navigation support and the lack, or inaccessibility, of information provided online about finding and travelling to venues.

*If I do manage to get somewhere to the general area independently, finding a venue *laughter* can be challenging sometimes... I'm a cane user and you know like Google Maps is great up to a point... it can get me on the right street and I'm happy sort of following that, although it's a bit scary because it doesn't really tell you how to cross roads and traffic flow, things like that (P2, “Semi-professional” pianist, with V.I.)*

How to get to the venue? Because if we asked Google to tell me the direction towards the Cadogan Hall in Sloane Square then these days it hardly gives me any verbal information... I sometimes resolve this problem

by going into their website and there is an address, and then I start researching into more detail but it's so difficult to get the information, how we can get there from the station etcetera (P1, musician with V.I.)

P2 felt that accessing this information over the phone could be similarly complex.

If the person I'm talking to has... a really good vibe, basically, you know if they seem friendly and engaged with me, I'll ask them like, hey, it'd be really helpful if you could just let me know what do I do when I get to your building. If I'm speaking to someone who's... they're giving me, like, one word answers and giving me the impression that they want to be off the call as quickly as possible, then I'll just make it work, you know? (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

P2 highlights the impact of negative staff interactions on the experiences of both audience members and professionals planning visits to cultural and musical spaces. As Linda highlighted, human connection, and familiarisation, with staff may be an important factor in ensuring that BVI individuals 'feel comfortable asking for whatever they need' and feeling 'welcomed in the space'.

Even when BVI people have successfully navigated to a venue, they may struggle to find the correct entrance. P2 had relied on assistance from strangers in the past, resulting in concerns about appearing unprofessional.

Unless there's a really obvious, like glowing archway or something, trying to find the entrance is basically me walking very slowly along and feeling the surfaces until I find something that feels like a door... people usually will be like, 'do you want help', and then I get sort of brought in, but then that kind of makes me feel less professional, you know, like I've been brought into my employer by some random around the streets, who's found me feeling the wall (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

Comments evidence the importance of providing adequate information and support to BVI professionals prior to arrival at a workplace. This should include travel and transport recommendations and walking instructions from local bus/train stations.

11.3 Sighted support in the workplace

P5 felt that the only way round the challenge of getting to, and around, workplaces, especially in new locations, was the employment of a support worker.

I think really to work independently... it's better to have that [a support worker] than to be reliant on friends and family (P5, Charity director, musician with V.I.)

They felt that a reliance on friends and family could have implications for one's sense of independence, but in contrast, P2 specifically sought assistance from friends or family, commenting that it was 'just easier sometimes' to pay someone they knew. This also offered an additional sense of safety.

I'll often get people who are very drunk come up to me and touch me and speak very loudly in my ear, and swear a lot ... the people who I bring with me would be sort of present in that kind of situation, just watching my back, which makes me feel safer (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

This additional feeling of security may be particularly important when travelling from venues at night, and for those busking and performing in spaces outdoors.

Since I've moved to cane use, I just can't go out at night when it's dark and walking at night-time without the dog is just too much for me. So that's kind of important because coming out of a gig, it's usually dark (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

They have their valuable equipment, their instruments, their money, like literally money laying there. So, I think the sense of safety is always kind of like a priority that is always being raised (P10, Performing arts manager)

Sighted support helps BVI professionals access information about their environment, move around safely, and provides support with tasks such as accessing food. As Linda noted, 'It's time consuming to get food for yourself if you're blind'.

How large the venue is? And which direction shall I face when I stand on the concert platform etcetera? Without the walking assistance such as a support worker or colleagues who are happy to assist, it is almost impossible... if I successfully arranged the personal assistant either through Access to Work or with the help from the employers or organisers then it is much less difficult for me to resolve that problem, but otherwise, the barrier is always there (P1, musician with V.I.)

A support worker had also helped P5 manage groups of children when working as a facilitator since losing their sight, 'I'm still ultimately responsible, but... in terms of like people getting out of rooms or anything like that, then they're [support worker] much more able to see that'. Although, there were costs associated with this, 'I think financially because I always now work with another person, it's a bit of a hit'.

11.4 Working as a Guide Dog owner

Whilst only highlighted by one participant, P2 noted that working as a musician with a Guide Dog could bring additional considerations of the dog's comfort and safety.

One thing that was always a challenge was trying to find a place for the dog to lie when I'm playing because I don't want the dog's head right next to an amplifier... and I don't want him lying next to a bunch of cables that he could rip out of a wall if he got spooked (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

For performers who choose not to bring their Guide Dog on stage, planning may be required to manage dogs onsite. Professionals that choose not to travel with their Guide Dog may face additional challenges relating to independent mobility; sighted support may be particularly important to these individuals.

12 Making music

Unsurprisingly, of utmost importance to BVI musicians was their ability to make music to strive for professional excellence.

I strive for excellence in everything I do so that like no matter how I am physically, the work that I provide for people is still good... I know other musicians who do that as well, and they're not disabled, you know. That's, yeah, that's a natural instinct (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

I think loving the music is the most important thing, and we forget about this, we tend to forget about this if we are not careful because of the difficulties, because of the many issues (P1, musician with V.I.)

Yet, participants highlighted multiple challenges relating to their lives as performing musicians, particularly in relation to ensemble playing and musical notation.

12.1 Ensemble settings

P3 reflected on progress towards inclusive work practises in classical musical ensembles, to the benefit of their participation.

There is a greater understanding and acceptance that actually you'd like the music early, thank you very much, and like people to get organised in advance and tell you what they're gonna play and make that possible for you to learn the dots. Oh that's coming, it's better than it was and certainly you know [name of ensemble removed] have made that work, and made that possible, and that has been a total game changer (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

Notably, whilst a lack of visual information about one's surroundings was cited as a challenge relating to navigation, both P2 and P3 felt that, in actuality, a lack of visual cues during ensemble performances had never been an issue for them.

Sometimes people expect that a visually impaired or blind musician playing with other sighted musicians on stage is going to have trouble because they can't... pick up on all the visual cues... in some cases that might be true... but my experience has been generally that those visual cues are completely unnecessary. If you listen properly and you engage with the music, then you are on an equal playing field (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

Not being able to see them [conductor] is I think largely, I haven't found it to be an issue and you can work with a conductor and find another way of doing things (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

However, P3 acknowledged other barriers to participation, namely, the additional time required for an ensemble player with V.I. to carry out their work.

You are not ever going to make it possible for a musician with a visual impairment who needs to learn all their music to take up a full-time orchestral chair... and I don't even know whether I would want to if I could, I don't even

know because of the amount of music you need to learn and play under pressure in concert (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

P3 felt that with some flexibility, and in an orchestra with core repertoire, participation in such ensembles may be possible, but emphasised that realistically, it may be necessary for BVI musicians to curate and run their own ensembles to enable them to manage the additional time required for them to learn music. P3 added that a greater emphasis on music that does not rely on notation was common amongst musicians with V.I. Indeed, ensembles such as IVO and the British Paraorchestra were both cited as providing opportunities for improvisatory skill development. Baluji, founder of IVO reflected on active encouragement of these skills in ensemble members.

Most of the Western musicians don't like to improvise at all... they didn't want to improvise, so I said improvisation is very easy. It's just you play one note, and then everybody should follow. It's like a therapy. It's like you can improvise anything. You just play, it's never wrong... I will always say that in the rehearsal it's a mistake, but on the stage, it's improvisation (Baluji, Founder of IVO)

12.2 Musical scores

Of all items rated for satisfaction, the greatest proportion of "Very dissatisfied" responses was given in relation to the availability of accessible musical scores format ($n= 10$, 38.46%), along with how easy it is to apply for the "Access to Work" scheme ([Figure 3](#) and [Table 29](#), Appendix L). Interviews highlighted challenges relating to accessing Braille scores, the quality of these scores and time required to access them, and the time-consuming nature of committing scores to memory. The latter had significant implications for participation in ensembles.

We can't do it in a speedy way [read music], and then we need some braille translations or audio version of information (P1, musician with V.I.)

There's no question that you can rock up to the first rehearsal and go well, I don't really know it yet. I have to do the homework before the first rehearsal, everybody else turns up and gets some music on the stand, so there's a lot of extra homework (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

P3 felt that a lack of access to Braille scores had resulted in missing out on early opportunities to develop as an ensemble player. As a teacher, P3 felt strongly about the importance of young musicians not missing out on such opportunities.

The thing you can't get away from is that I don't sight read and that has obviously impacted my early career because I didn't play in orchestras... I don't think we thought, and certainly RNIB at that point didn't sort of push for visually impaired musicians to be involved in orchestras... Once you miss that through school, it's very difficult to persuade anybody that you could do this. And that early training was the thing that was impacted the most and that was in special school (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

Similarly, one survey respondent, who had also attended specialist schools throughout their education, reported discouragement of Braille music use at school (Male, 31). They felt that this had put them at a musical disadvantage (they reported having worked in the music industry as a performer for 3-5 years).

12.2.1 Access to scores

P3 made use of the RNIB's Braille transcription service to access musical scores, but this itself had a lead time, and learning music was still time consuming.

So with [name of organisation removed] they send me some music early and I get it transcribed and memorise it. And that is how it happens. And that's the only way it's gonna happen (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

P3 reflected on technological progress in production of better-quality Braille scores, and software which allowed individuals to produce their own Braille music output.

It's now out there, a template, a guide to publishers and the music sector into how to produce the best music XML files for translation using Braille translation software packages... if you produce a good XML file, it produces much better Braille (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

P2, a non-Braille music reader, also noted the impact of recent technological developments on improving access to scores, although they still avoided 'situations where I will be dependent on sheet music at all'.

If I am gonna play classical music, I'll make sure that I have got enough time to be able to learn something by ear in detail... If I need to read sheet music, I'll either have a tablet over there that I will sort of enlarge things on, but again, that's really slow. If I can get an XML file I'll bring it into Sibelius, and Sibelius recently became accessible for screen reader support, which is amazing (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

One participant, P5, could no longer read sheet music due to their sight loss, with implications for the type of work they now undertook in music.

I used to be booked because I was a really good sight reader... I couldn't really find anything that would allow me to access my music quickly to be able to do that... I know RNIB have a transcription service... but because I don't read Braille music and I need a really big size font to be able to read music, that's been a real challenge. And I think as a singer, it's twice as challenging because you need to be able to see words and notes (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

Despite seeking advice from Access to Work, P5 had not found a way to access sheet music.

13 Teaching

13.1 Challenges for blind and visually impaired teachers

P1 highlighted that as a music teacher with V.I., and a Braille music reader, there were barriers to accessing appropriate teaching materials. P1 had been reluctant to try teaching because of this, and subsequently, the additional time required to prepare for teaching.

Teaching was something I was very hesitant about to start with because in order to teach anything, I have to do a lot of preparation and because of the lack of material, such as the Braille version of the textbooks, or methods or etudes, I was not sure how much I could do for teaching (P1, musician with V.I.)

P3 had transcribed their teaching materials, alongside the RNIB, using Access to Work funding to cover the costs of this process. However, keeping materials up-to-date could be difficult when working in this way.

The thing is the textbooks are evolving from time to time... the syllabus for that [ABRSM] has been changing every few years, and even though those things should all be classified into braille, not everything is (P1, musician with V.I.)

Not having quick access to materials created difficulties supporting students in the way that P1 wanted to, which had become a source of anxiety.

If they came up with those things like orchestral or chamber music parts which I didn't know in advance. Then I have to keep asking them what is written on the music, or I have to ask them to wait for weeks or months until the things are translated into Braille, or otherwise if somebody could play it for me so that I could grasp the information. But by that time, the deadline for them would be passed, so it's always a sort of competition between their time limit and my ability. And sometimes it's impossible. And then I have to say, 'I can't do this, and I can't do that' because of those issues, and that's the very sad part, from that the disappointment, I feel sadness, and this causes mental stress (P1, musician with V.I.)

Just as learning skills as a performing musician may be difficult without visual cues, P1 noted that this created challenges as a teacher, particularly when working with beginners. Physical touch and contact was one way to gain an understanding of a pupil's technique, but with obvious safeguarding considerations.

Very occasionally, I ask them and their parents, or carers, or teachers, or their studying assistant who is in charge of their safety and security... if I could feel the elbow, or feel the shoulder... these things are easier with the adult students because its under their responsibility, we can just discuss it (P1, musician with V.I.)

13.2 Challenges for blind and visually impaired students

Two interviewees reflected on their experiences of teaching, including with children and adults students, and those with and without VI. Many of their comments point to broader issues impacting on BVI young people. Firstly, P3 felt that these children and young people continued to be disadvantaged in mainstream school environments which focus on print rather than Braille and may not have the resource and expertise to fully support them.

I don't think there was always the space and the head space for them to think about supporting their students with additional needs (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

Reflecting on their own educational experiences, P3 felt that learning to read Braille, and receiving mobility training, had been essential skill development, with implications for their participation in the music industry as an adult.

Out of all the things that I learned when I was at school the two most important were how to read Braille and how to use a cane. Everything else is a spin off from those (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

Mobility is an issue because if you can't get around with a cane, how are you going to get to your music venue or your concert venue or work, or the shops or anything else it's, you know, that's a life skill (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

Without this exposure to Braille reading, and then Braille notation, P3 felt that engagement with a wide repertoire was restricted, limiting musical development.

Everybody else is playing it at sight and puts the instrument in their hands, not the score, so the amount of dots, the amount of notes under their fingers by the time you've got to 16, 17 is much, much greater... I've got one [student] you ring up for the lesson and his hands are on the piano. He's playing music from his own head and he can't keep his hands off the piano... Now, if he was sight reading print, he'd be all over Chopin music and studies and all over all sorts of things by now, but he's not because he's learned Braille late... so his training has is already different, and if you're thinking about classical music, which is his real love, a compromise (P3, Freelance musician and teacher with V.I.)

P3 viewed these barriers as an indication of wider issues within the education system for pupils with V.I., stemming from inadequate government funding, 'but you see without fixing that, it'll be very difficult to fix the music'. Additional practical challenges for BVI pupils raised by P3, included a lack of visual cues during learning, and barriers to developing physical presence through an awareness of one's body, 'There are certain things that just don't come naturally to visually impaired students'. Despite these challenges, P3 felt that 'There are lots of blind students now going through music college... it has become more of a reality in more recent times and I don't think that's the same barrier anymore'.

14 Confidence and resilience

Barriers to access and inclusion in the industry not only have implications for an individual's employment and finances, but also their well-being. Linda reflected on what they felt were confidence issues amongst many BVI musicians, 'They're amazed within themselves that anybody wants them'. Musicians who provided advice to others in open-ended responses ([Table 55](#), Appendix S) highlighted the importance of confidence and persistence to those forging a career in music.

Just keep going really. I got a knock back, don't get put off (Male, 66, with V.I.)

Drive, determination, focus on what you want and how you intend to achieve it (Female, 36, with V.I.)

The challenges highlighted by respondents in the current project suggests that, arguably, an even greater level of resilience may be required of someone with a V.I. to succeed in the music industry. Experiences of exclusion, either through purposeful actions or a lack of awareness from others, may test this resilience. As P5 highlighted, this might be particularly challenging for those already experiencing difficulties due to sight loss.

My mental health wasn't that great after experiencing sudden sight loss... some of the worst experiences I've had are when people haven't adapted anything that they're doing (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

Whilst P2 reflected on being a confident and positive person, there was a point at which practical concerns and the associated anxiety overtook this confidence.

Probably my biggest barrier is, I have a lot of confidence, but it's kind of got this threshold where... the sort of yeah, stress and anxiety of some things, just sort of, is it worth it? (P2, "Semi-professional" pianist with V.I.)

Given the barriers to inclusion experienced in various workplace contexts, it is perhaps not surprising that confidence, and the importance of confidence building with BVI musicians, was highlighted as key to improving employability. Even having successfully set up their own charitable organisation after sight loss, P5 noted continued psychological challenges.

I was painting a really positive picture because I set up an organisation... but it's not all positive, it's difficult and it's challenging and it's exhausting, and it's not been plain sailing... it's really hard for someone if they're struggling to come to terms with sight loss or going through it to see people being super positive with stuff (P5, Charity Director and musician with V.I.)

P5 highlights that there is a balance to be struck between the promotion of confidence, positivity and problem-solving, and continuing to identify and acknowledge where BVI people may continue to experience difficulties relating to their V.I. and working life.

15 Engagement and experiences with Inner Vision Orchestra

15.1 Public engagement

All respondents were asked about their engagement with IVO, including event attendance and engagement with different types of media content and publicity. Similar proportions of respondents from the full sample as from the sample of BVI respondents had engaged with public and media activities undertaken by IVO ([Figure 6](#) and [Table 38](#), Appendix N). In the full sample, the activity that the greatest proportion had taken part in was reading a newspaper or online article about IVO or its members ($n= 43$, 39.45%) followed by attending an IVO concert in-person ($n= 40$, 36.70%). Amongst BVI respondents, the greatest proportion had listened to a radio broadcast featuring interviews with members from IVO ($n= 17$, 38.64%), followed by attending a concert in-person ($n= 16$, 36.36%).

The biggest difference between the groups related to attending an IVO concert online (a greater proportion of respondents with V.I. had done this) and watching a news or other television feature (a greater proportion of the full sample had done this). This may reflect a greater interest in online concerts, and lower engagement with visual media, amongst BVI people.

15.2 Activities undertaken with Inner Vision Orchestra

Respondents who reported being associated with IVO were asked how long they had been a member, and about the IVO activities they had taken part in ([Table 39](#), Appendix O).

- Respondents who were members of IVO ($n= 14$) had been a member for a mean of 7.54 years ($SD= 4.54$), ranging from 6 months to 13.5 years.
- Around a third ($n= 4$, 30.77%) had been a member for over 10 years.
- The most common activities amongst members were paid performance ($n= 14$, 100%), attending an IVO workshop ($n= 12$, 85.71%), touring nationally ($n= 11$, 78.57%), and recording in a studio ($n= 10$, 71.43%).
- Touring internationally and performing unpaid were less common, with the latter likely reflecting the organisation's focus on providing paid work opportunities.

15.3 Benefits of being part of Inner Vision Orchestra

Members of IVO were asked to rate the extent to which their membership had impacted on various factors ([Table 40](#), Appendix O). Most felt that IVO had contributed positively and "Very much so" to all factors, including increasing confidence, well-being and teamworking skills, and providing learning opportunities. The factor which received the greater number of responses indicating no positive impact was developing public communication skills; this was despite the majority reporting being interviewed by the media ($n= 9$, 64.29%) and having the opportunity to deliver workshops IVO ($n= 8$, 57.14%). It is not known if

respondents wanted to develop these skills, but given their importance to performers, this may reflect a potential area of expansion of IVO's support.

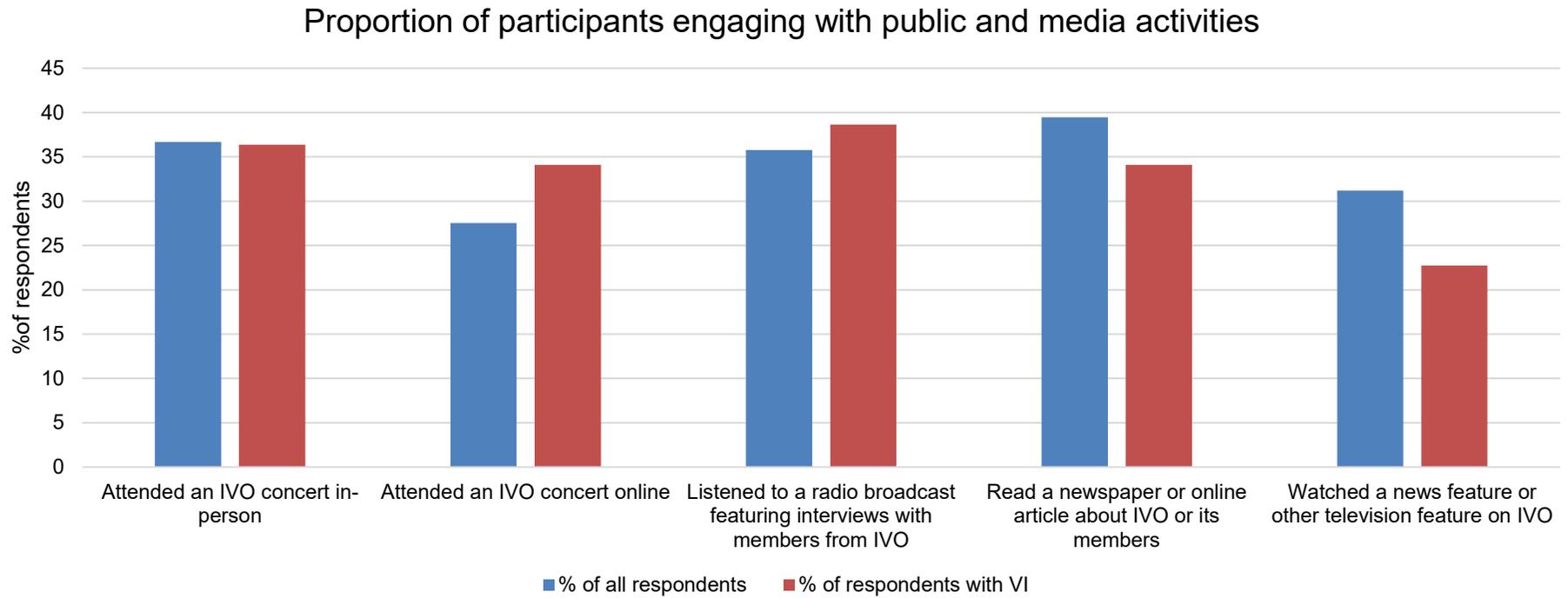
15.4 Challenges associated with being part of IVO

Six respondents reflected on challenges related to their time with IVO. One respondent each highlighted issues relating to a lack of clarity about payment for performances and a lack of assistance in the past (but also an improvement over the years). Others highlighted difficulties outside the control of the orchestra, such as issues with taxi drivers (this respondent noted the help that IVO had provided on this), difficulty attending rehearsals when living outside London, and IT difficulties (this individual had worked around this issue with IVO by using a phone rather than computer to participate). One respondent commented, 'There's a lot of love with the orchestra, so things that feel like a challenge are things that are out of their hands'.

15.5 Support that IVO members would find most helpful

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of a list of types of support that they would find most helpful from IVO ([Table 41](#), Appendix O). Regular paid rehearsals and more sighted guides were felt to be "Very important" by the greatest number of respondents (9 out of 14, 64.29%). However, all five types of support were felt to be "Very important" by the majority, apart from the provision of transport to and from IVO activities, which received the highest number of "Not at all important" responses. Open-ended responses to this question highlighted a general requirement for greater human resource to provide organisational support (admin and marketing) and personal assistance for members. As one respondent commented, sighted guiding might only provide one part of the support required by a blind or partially sighted performer. Practical support before performances, such as make-up and food and drink provision, were also felt to be useful, as well as more frequent rehearsals, and the option to rehearse remotely for those outside London.

Figure 6. Proportion of full sample and blind and visually impaired respondents who had engaged with IVO publicity and media.



16 Experiences and views of employers, providers and other representatives from the music industry

16.1 Background of employers, providers and respondents in subsidiary roles

The majority of employers, providers and respondents in subsidiary roles were either a programmer or manager of a music venue/festival (n= 11, 28.21%), an artist agent or manager (n= 11, 28.21%) or a booker for a venue or event (n= 8, 20.51%). Seven of these respondents reported a VI, reporting multiple roles as an employer, provider or stakeholder. Three worked in specialist education, two in mainstream education, and one each in venue/event programming, artist management, on a committee for a union, and broadcasting. Two of these individuals reported a leadership role in charity, and two a role as artistic or creative director. [Table 42](#) in Appendix P provides an overview of the roles held by employers, providers and those in subsidiary roles.

16.2 Experiences of employing and hiring blind and visually impaired professionals

The majority of organisations represented in the sample were from smaller organisations, with 10 or less employees (17 out of 35, 58.62%) ([Table 43](#), Appendix P). According to employers...

- There was a mean of 1.69 (SD= 5.48) people with severe sight impairment (blindness) working for, or hired by, the organisations represented ([Table 44](#), Appendix Q).
- There was a mean of 0.43 (SD= 1.02) people with a sight impairment (partial sight) working for, or hired by, the organisations represented. ([Table 45](#), Appendix Q).
- 10 employers (27.78%) said that they “Often” employed, hired or commissioned a blind or partially sighted person ([Table 46](#), Appendix Q).
- 5 of the 6 BVI employers who responded to this question reported that no other person with a SSI had been employed, hired, or commissioned by their organisation and 3 out of 3 reported that no person with a SI had been employed, hired, or commissioned).
- Most organisations had no people with severe sight impairment (M= 0.3, SD= 0.93) or severe sight impairment (M= 0.3, SD= 0.68) working in a leadership or management role ([Table 47](#), Appendix Q).

It is perhaps surprising that a greater proportion had employed, hired or commissioned someone with a SSI than a SI, although the number of respondents was small, and this may not represent wider industry figures.

Across both employers with and without V.I., the majority reported that they had worked with BVI professionals from the UK; none reported that they had worked with a majority of BVI professionals from abroad ([Table 48](#), Appendix Q).

16.3 Reasons for not employing, hiring or commissioning blind and visually impaired professionals

Respondents who stated that they rarely or never employed, hired or commissioned BVI professionals were asked why this was, from a list of statements ([Table 49](#), Appendix Q). By far the most common reason was that they had rarely come across people with V.I. in their field of work ($n= 19$, 90.48%). Indeed, the one employer with V.I. who said they rarely worked with other blind or partially sighted professionals gave this reason. One person reported not coming across a person with V.I. with the right skills, and another that they did not think a person with V.I. would be successful in their field of work. One person stated that they would not have the financial means to provide adequate support to someone with V.I.

16.4 Confidence in hiring blind and visually impaired professionals

Employers without V.I. were asked how confident they felt hiring and supporting BVI people in various tasks (e.g., understanding needs, providing support, and sourcing help and information) ([Table 50](#), Appendix Q).

- The tasks for which the highest number of employers were “Not confident at all” were ensuring accessible recruitment materials and using schemes such as Access to Work. A third were not confident at all with these tasks ($n= 10$, 33.33%).
- The majority of employers felt “Quite confident” about understanding the needs of employees and job candidates with V.I., providing the right support to someone with V.I. that works with or for them, and finding sources of help and information to support an employee or colleague with V.I.
- Nearly half of employers felt “Very confident” about hiring someone with V.I.
- At least 5 employers were not at all confident about understanding the needs of employees or candidates with V.I. ($n= 6$, 20%), providing the right support ($n= 5$, 16.67%), finding sources of support and information ($n= 7$, 23.33%), and as mentioned above, ensuring accessible recruitment materials and using accessibility schemes.
- When asked if their organisation was certified on the government’s ‘Disability Confident’ scheme, just 3 out of 30 said “Yes” (16 said “No”, and 10 were not sure) ([Table 51](#), Appendix Q).

Whilst employers may be open to employing BVI people, they may not be completely prepared to do so.

16.5 Perceived challenges and benefits of hiring blind and visually impaired professionals

An open-ended question asked employers about the perceived challenges associated with employing, hiring, or commissioning someone with V.I. 17 respondents provided an answer (themes outlined in [Table 52](#), Appendix R). The topics that multiple respondents referred to were...

- Difficulties with Access to Work and concerns about financial support/resource (mentioned by four respondents)
- Lack of experience working with people with BVI people and/or greater experience of working with people with other disabilities (mentioned by three respondents). Reassuringly there was also an openness to learn how to work better with people with V.I.
- Potential issues with travel to venues and finding the support that some might need to manage this (mentioned by two respondents).

Access budgets are often too small - access needs are not fixed and often vary and financial flexibility is needed (Female, 56)

It's not yet part of our everyday working practice, and when you run a charity on very little (i.e., little financial or human resource to spare) it can be difficult to make changes and accommodations as quickly as one would like (Female, 47)

For performances all is fine, but they need assistance just getting to our remote location and that is not always easy to find (Male, 67)

I would not know how to start knowing what they need - or the spectrum of needs they may have - compared to other disabilities which I have more experience with (Other, 28)

Employers were also asked to reflect on the benefits of employing, hiring, or commissioning BVI people. From the 19 responses, the most common benefit, cited by 6 participants, was an increase in diversity and the enrichment of working environments (themes outlined in [Table 52](#), Appendix R).

Diversity can only ever bring enrichment to our organisation; the benefits of having different voices contribute to our work are too many to mention. Not to mention the benefits of our audience seeing themselves represented in the musicians we work with (Female, 47)

Diversity of lived experience informing organisational development and programme (Female, 32)

Audience appreciation. Our blind pianist has twice gained our greater audience numbers (Male, 67)

This highlights that greater representation of BVI people in music is a cyclical process; greater opportunities and accessibility rely on greater representation of people with V.I. within different employment and performance contexts; this,

however, relies on an increased awareness of their needs and abilities in the first place ([Figure 7](#)).

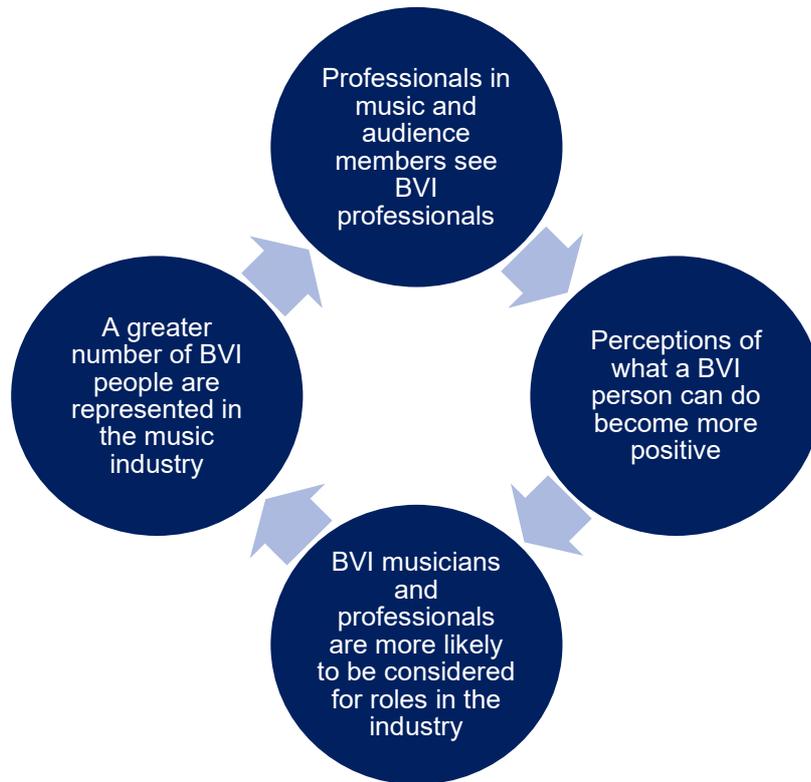


Figure 7. Process of representation of blind and visually impaired professionals in the music industry.

16.6 Encouraging greater employment, hiring, and commissioning of blind and visually impaired professionals

Employers were asked to reflect on factors which might help to increase inclusion of BVI professionals ([Table 53](#), Appendix R).

- The factors which the greatest number of employers felt would be most important were government incentives and a review of their organisation's recruitment practice and policy (6 out of 30 felt each of these items was the most important factor).
- However, almost as many ($n= 5$) felt that government incentives were the least important factor.
- 5 employers rated a relationship with an organisation that could help recruit these professionals as the second most important factor, but 6 rated this factor of low importance.

Ratings highlight the disparity in actions taken and support sought by employers to implement change at their organisations. This likely reflects their varying progress towards accessibility and inclusion, as well as organisational focuses and priorities.

16.7 Familiarity with types of support and information amongst employers

When asked about familiar sources of support and information they, most were familiar with the Musicians' Union/The Royal Society of Musicians (18 out of 20), Access to Work ($n= 17$), and RNIB ($n= 17$) (Figure 8 and Table 54, Appendix R). It is perhaps unsurprising that most ($n= 14$) were familiar with BMF and IVO, given the recruitment of respondents through BMF. Almost as many were familiar with the British Paraorchestra ($n= 13$), but just one was aware of Travel Hands, and three with Blind in Business. Only five were familiar with the Disability Confident scheme, reflecting the small number who reported being part of the scheme ($n= 3$).

16.6.1 Sources of support and information that employers would like

Open-ended responses highlighted support and information that employers felt might be helpful in encouraging and increasing inclusion of BVI people. These are listed below, alongside the number of times each item was mentioned.

- Normalise BVI people as musicians ($n= 3$)
- Sharing of best practice ($n= 3$)
- Accessibility training ($n= 1$)
- Apprenticeships ($n= 1$)
- Government support ($n= 2$)
- Help accessing the right technology ($n= 1$)
- Information to support people who are self-employed ($n= 1$)
- Opportunities for BVI people to speak about their needs ($n= 1$)
- Raising awareness ($n= 1$)

Themes mentioned by multiple respondents were the importance of highlighting the financial support available from the government, normalising the presence of V.I. in the industry, and the sharing of best practice and success stories.

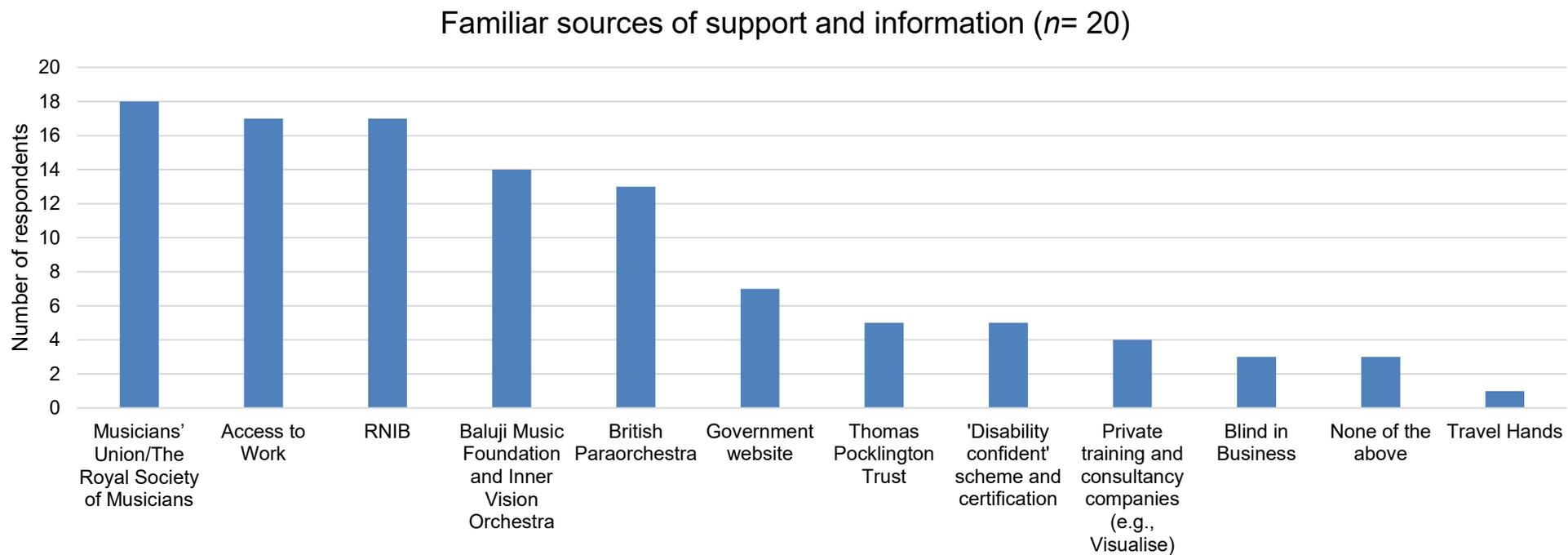
Much more info on government incentives or the benefits of employing individuals with visual impairments. The music industry is full of the 'gig economy' approach - so many organisations I'm sure only take steps if they can understand business benefit! (Female, 46, Over 10 years in industry)

A PR campaign to normalise blind people working as musicians (Female, 47, Over 10 years in industry)

Examples of best practice that could be shared (Male, 57, Over 10 years in industry)

Responses highlight the importance of raising awareness of the presence and abilities of BVI professionals in the industry, the means through which they might be supported through government schemes, and sharing of best practice between charities, venues, and musical organisations to ensure access across all industry environments.

Figure 8. Sources of support and information with which employers ($n= 20$) without V.I. were familiar.



Appendix A – Experiences and challenges identified in interviews and open-ended survey responses.

Attitudes towards disability and V.I. in the industry

- Others assume other disabilities or impairments
- Perception of not being hired because of V.I.
- Feeling of people with V.I. being disadvantaged compared to other disabilities
- Need for profession-first, not disability-first, language
- Tokenistic inclusion of V.I. and disability ('novelty acts')
- Disclosure may be particularly difficult in music
- Feeling ignored
- Feeling like musicians with V.I. are not taken seriously
- Negative impact of comparison with famous musicians with V.I. (focus on 'exceptional' individuals)
- People with disability viewed as needing help ('sympathy')
- Expected to be independent but then not always trusted
- Hard to find manager or agent

Work opportunities and pay

- Lack of performance opportunities
- Lack of regular work or pay in music
- Lots of performing but little paid work
- Need for V.I. professionals in different disciplines
- Need for more diversity in leadership roles (diverse role models)
- V.I. as a barrier to teaching opportunities

Mainstream and 'disability' arts

- Need for inclusion in mainstream music scene
- 'Disabled' ensembles have a role to play in increasing access and inclusion
- Benefits of 'disability' ensembles
- 'Disabled' ensembles a double-edged sword

Travelling to and from venues

- Cost implications of transport and travel
- Worried about appearing unprofessional (independent mobility)
- Feeling dependant with regards to travel and transport
- Harder in the dark without a Guide Dog
- Choosing easier gigs over fulfilling gigs
- Logistical challenges of getting to a venue with equipment

Inside venues and sighted support

- Increased interest in venue accessibility across the industry

- Importance of venues being accessible to both audience and performer
- Importance of feeling welcome
- Unfamiliar venues can be problematic
- Safety and security challenges when busking
- Need to show musicians with V.I. around spaces
- Venues may have little experience of managing visitors with V.I.
- Need for support to access food and drink

Navigating inside spaces as a performer

- Challenges of a Guide Dog when working
- Importance of information in advance
- Positive impact of organisations and movements on venue accessibility
- Sighted support offering independence and safety

Teaching with V.I.

- Lack of accessible teaching materials
- Additional time to prepare for teaching
- Finding ways of teaching sighted students to read music
- Being unable to assist students causes frustration
- Challenge of instrumental teaching without sight (physical touch required)
- Need to access Braille music for teaching
- Funding remains a barrier to accessible teaching materials

Technology and social media

- Difficulties with social media
- Social media as a new barrier
- PA may be needed to provide social media support
- Need for music technology training at school
- Music Apps don't always work with accessibility settings
- Accessibility struggles to keep up with fast technological progress
- Some technology remains inherently visual (e.g., social media, production technologies)

Scores and musical notation

- Difficult to access scores in preferred format
- Time consuming to learn sheet music
- Lost ability to read sheet music with sight loss
- Avoids situations where required to read sheet music
- Technology allowing musicians to access sheet music
- Organising own access to Braille music (for ensembles and teaching purposes)
- Progress in Braille music production (allowing own production of scores)

Music making

- Striving for professional excellence
- Passion and love for music
- Audience feedback boosts confidence
- Music as an opportunity to give back

Ensemble settings

- Increased understanding of V.I. needs in ensemble settings
- Musicians managing fine without visual information
- V.I. impacting on types of ensemble played in
- Unable to read sheet music makes orchestras hard to be involved in
- Difficult to find professional ensemble playing opportunities
- Finding ways to work around the issues of learning music for ensembles

Careers advice and professional development

- Organisations and initiatives working with musicians with V.I.
- Individuals not making use of careers support at university
- Formal musical education not preparing someone for a career in music
- Importance of practical experience (e.g., performance opportunities)
- Continued self-development in music (e.g., workshops)

Practical support and navigation

- Navigation can be hard in live environments
- Need for practical support limits opportunities
- Performance spaces can be particularly difficult environment

Access to Work

- Positive experiences with Access to Work
- Access to Work for freelancers not understood
- Having to pay out expenses before receiving Access to Work or pay
- Financial limitations on Access to Work scheme
- Access to Work takes time to set-up
- Access to work providing Support Worker
- Access to Work forms are not accessible

Adaptations and workplace accommodations

- Support worker when working with children
- Financial implications of needing to work alongside another person
- Everything takes additional time with a V.I.

Work patterns

- Music not offering a regular 9-5 work life
- Freelance can suit needs as individuals with V.I. well (flexible)

Asking for help and speaking up

- Asking for adaptations leading to loss of job opportunities in the future
- Fear of speaking out
- Important for others to ask what they can do to adapt to individuals with V.I.
- Need to work with performers to adapt and meet their needs

Sight loss

- Late-onset sight loss (adaptation to sight loss)
- Changing employees attitudes due to sight loss

Additional challenges

- Disadvantaged when based outside London
- Keeping fit (and additional disability or health conditions)

Support or training required

- Need for Braille music tuition
- Need for financial support
- Need support for stage presentation
- Need to increase technological skills
- Wanting to know more about V.I.-specific organisations, opportunities and funding
- Need for peer support from professionals working in different roles and with similar experiences of V.I. (e.g., professionals with late-onset sight loss)

Organisations

- Organisations working with musicians with V.I. to develop them professionally (e.g., skills in connecting with audience)
- Organisations finding ways to make information and training accessible for professionals with V.I.
- Organisations for the blind providing support (e.g., RNIB providing professional development support or training) but some consider important types of support as 'non-essential' (e.g., shopping for clothes, developing professional image)
- IVO providing training and development

Networking and opportunities

- Importance of networking in career development
- Importance of performance opportunities that allow social connections to be made
- Networking can be difficult for individuals with V.I.
- Guide dog might make networking easier
- Opportunities gained word-of-mouth and via existing contacts
- Difficulty finding work opportunities
- Organisations/individuals incidentally coming across musicians with V.I.

Psychological impacts of a lack of access and inclusion

- Feelings of exclusion, isolation
- Potential confidence issues amongst musicians with V.I.
- Important to acknowledge the difficulties too (being completely positive can be damaging)
- Importance of self-belief as a musician with V.I.

Appendix B – Survey questions

About you

This page contains questions about you, including questions about health and disability. If you are not comfortable answering any of these questions, please select or enter 'Prefer not to say'.

Which country do you live in?

England
Scotland
Wales
Northern Ireland
Prefer not to say

Which region do you live in? (England)

North-East
North-West
Yorkshire and The Humber
East Midlands
West Midlands
East of England
London
South-East
South-West
Prefer not to say

Which region do you live in? (Scotland)

Highlands and Hebrides
Borders and South-West
Central
North-East
Orkney and Shetland
Prefer not to say

Which region do you live in? (Wales)

North Wales
Mid Wales
South Wales
Prefer not to say

More about you

This page contains a few more questions about you.

Please enter your age, in years, in the box below, or enter 'Prefer not to say'.

Please indicate your gender.

Male
Female

Other
Prefer not to say

Please indicate your ethnicity from the list below.

White
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
Asian/Asian British
Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British
Prefer not to say
Other (please specify):

Do you have any of the following types of disability, conditions, or impairments? Please select all that apply. If you do not have a disability, ongoing health condition or impairment, please select 'None of the above'.

Visual impairment (including blindness and partial sight)
Hearing impairment
Physical disability or condition affecting mobility
Chronic pain or pain related disorder
Mental health condition
Learning disabilities and/or Autism spectrum disorder (including Asperger's)
None of the above
Prefer not to say
Other health condition or disability (please specify):

Visual impairment

This page contains some questions about your visual impairment. As an exploration of the experiences of people with visual impairments working in, or aspiring to work in, the music industry, it's important we understand as much as possible about your impairment. If you are not comfortable answering any of the following questions, please select 'Prefer not to say'.

Which of the following best describes you?

I am registered severely sight impaired (blind)
I am registered sight impaired (partially sighted)
I have a visual impairment which is not registered
Prefer not to say

Were you born with a visual impairment?

Yes
No, I developed a visual impairment before the age of 4 years
No, I developed a visual impairment aged 4 to 18 years
No, I developed a visual impairment aged 19 to 34 years
No, I developed a visual impairment after the age of 34 years
Don't know
Prefer not to say

Music at school

On this page, you'll be asked some questions about the types of school you attended and your experiences with music at school.

Please indicate the type of schools or colleges that you attended. Please select all that apply or select 'Not applicable'. We will ask about musical training in a separate question.

I attended a mainstream primary school with a specialist unit for students with visual impairment

I attended a mainstream primary school with no specialist unit for students with visual impairment

I attended a special primary school for students with visual impairment

I attended a mainstream secondary school

I attended a special secondary school

I attended a mainstream sixth form or college

I attended a sixth form or college for students with visual impairment

Not applicable

Prefer not to say

Which of the following activities did you have the opportunity to take part in as part of your school education (e.g., during school hours). We will ask about activities you did outside school (extracurricular) in the next question.

Learning an instrument

Participating in a musical ensemble

Learning musical theory

Learning to read Braille music notation

Learning to read score notation

Using digital scores and notation software such as Sibelius or Finale

Learning how to use audio recording equipment

Using music apps such as Garage Band or PocketBand

Performing in a school show or production

None of the above

Prefer not to say

Which of the following activities did you have the opportunity to take part in outside school, as an extracurricular activity?

Learning an instrument

Participating in a musical ensemble

Learning musical theory

Learning to read Braille music notation

Learning to read score notation

Using digital scores and notation software such as Sibelius or Finale

Learning how to use audio recording equipment

Using music apps such as Garage Band or PocketBand

Performing in a school show or production

None of the above

Prefer not to say

Musical background

This page asks you some questions about your musical background and training.

Which instrument or instruments do you currently play (including singing and singing style)? If you do not currently play an instrument or sing, please enter 'Not Applicable'.

Which of the following types of formal musical training have you undertaken? Please select all that apply, or select 'None of the above'. You can provide more details below.

Graded instrumental training, e.g., ABRSM or Trinity Music board examinations

Instrumental training from a conservatoire or other musical institution

An undergraduate performance-based degree

A postgraduate performance-based music degree

Workshop or short-course run by a music conservatoire or other musical institution

None of the above

Prefer not to say

Other (please specify):

Please provide any further details about your musical training, e.g., any informal or self-directed training, grades achieved, or institutions attended.

Have you received support, opportunities, or funding to assist in your musical development or career progression from any of the following sources? Please select all that apply.

Elizabeth Eagle-Bott Memorial Fund

The Amber Trust

Youth Music's NextGen Fund

The Webster and Davidson Mortification for the Blind

Drake Music

Help Musicians

Shape Arts

Inner Vision Orchestra

British Paraorchestra

Arts Council

Your local authority or council

I have not received any support, opportunities or funding

Prefer not to say

Sight loss charity or other (please specify):

How satisfied are you with the careers advice you received during your musical studies? Please select an answer from 1, 'Very dissatisfied' to 5, 'Very satisfied', or select 'Not applicable'.

Very dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Satisfied

Very satisfied

Prefer not to say

Not applicable

Please use this box to provide any further comments:

What is your experience of reading Braille music?

I am a fluent Braille music reader

I have some experience of reading Braille music

I do not read Braille music
Prefer not to say

Your role in the music industry

So that we can direct you to the right questions, please indicate which of the following best describes your role in the music industry. If you are both an employee and employer/provider, please select the fourth option.

1. I am currently hired by the music industry (this includes instrumentalists, singers, sound producers, composers, and music teachers)
2. I am an employer (this includes venue promoters and programmers, event organisers, and agents, etc.)
3. I work in a subsidiary role to the music industry (including broadcaster, journalist, media, funder, union rep. or campaigner, etc.)
4. I currently work both as an employee and as an employer or provider of services to the music sector
5. I used to work in the music industry
6. I do not currently work in the music industry and I do not wish to
7. I do not currently work in the music industry but I would like to

Time in the music industry

How long have you worked in the music industry? If you no longer work in the industry, please indicate how long you worked in the industry before you left.

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- Over 10 years
- Prefer not to say

Your previous role in the music industry

We would like to ask you a few questions about your previous role or roles in the music industry.

How long ago did you leave your work in the music industry?

- Less than a year ago
- 1-2 years ago
- 3-5 years ago
- Over 5 years ago

Which best describes the role or roles you held in the music industry?

I was hired by the music industry (this includes instrumentalists, singers, sound producers, composers, and music teachers)

I was an employer (this includes venue promoters and programmers, event organisers, and agents, etc.)

I worked in a subsidiary role to the music industry (this includes broadcaster, journalist, media, funder, union rep. or campaigner, etc.)

I worked both as an employee and as an employer or provider of services to the music sector

Your previous musical work in the industry

Which of the following musical roles were you paid for during your time in the music industry? If you did not do any of the following, please select 'None of the above'.

- Solo recording artist
- Session recording artist
- Live performances
- Instrumental or singing tutor
- DJing (excluding radio DJing)
- Sound recording and music production
- Training others in music technology and/or music production
- Composition
- Musical arranging
- Orchestra or ensemble conductor/lead
- Busking
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say
- Other role (please specify):

Your previous role in the industry

Which of the following leadership or subsidiary roles were you paid for during your time in the music industry? Please tick all that apply from the list below. If you held a different role, please select 'Other' and specify this role.

- Programmer or manager of a music venue/festival
- Chair or committee member for a musical festival
- Chair or committee member for a music competition (e.g., Young Musician of the Year)
- Management team for a record label or recording company
- Senior leadership or manager of a booking agency
- Artist agent or manager (including tour manager)
- A & R (Artists & repertoire) for a record label or recording company
- Booker (e.g., for venue or event)
- Leadership for a commissioning body (e.g., Arts Council England)
- Mainstream education provider
- Education provider for individuals with visual impairment (e.g., The Amber Trust)
- Senior leadership or manager for a media or production company
- Secretary or committee member for a union
- Broadcaster or music journalist
- Social media manager
- Fundraiser
- Marketing and PR
- Administration or accountancy
- Prefer not to say
- Mentoring
- Sighted guiding

Other role (please specify):

Your employment in the music industry

Some of the questions on this page ask you about your current employment situation and your finances. We do not ask for any specific figures, but we understand that these questions may still be sensitive. Rest assured, your responses will be treated confidentially and will not be used or shared outside the project. Remember, if you're not comfortable responding to a question, you can select or enter 'Prefer not to say'.

Thinking about your role as a musician or industry professional, are you employed (excluding zero-hour contracts) or self-employed within the music industry? This includes any music-related work, e.g., performing, producing, composing and teaching.

I am employed

I am self-employed

I am both employed and self-employed

Prefer not to say

On average, approximately how many hours of paid work (including rehearsals, concerts, recording, editing, composing etc.) do you do per week for your role/s in the music industry? Please select 'Prefer not to say' if you'd rather not answer this question. We understand that these hours may vary widely from week-to-week, please provide your best estimate.

35 hours or more (equivalent to full-time employment)

24-34 hours (equivalent to 3-4 days of work a week)

Less than 24 hours (equivalent to 1-2 days of work a week)

Prefer not to say

How much of your income comes from your work in the music industry? Income includes any benefits or financial support you might receive.

All of my income comes from work in the music industry

More than half but not all of my income comes from work in the music industry

Less than half of my income comes from work in the music industry

None of my income comes from work in the music industry

Prefer not to say

How do you find out about potential work opportunities? Please select all that apply. If you are happy to do so, please list any organisations in the box provided.

Word-of-mouth

An agency

A disability-focused organisation or charity

A manager

Online searching

Prefer not to say

Please name any relevant organisations here:

Do you receive any type of financial support or benefit from the government? This might include Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Disability Living Allowance (DLA), or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Which of the following musical roles have you been paid for during the last 12 months? If you have not been paid for any of the following, please select 'None of the above'.

Solo recording artist

Session recording artist

Live performances

Instrumental or singing tutor

DJing (excluding radio DJing)

Sound recording and music production

Training others in music technology and/or music production

Composition

Musical arranging

Busking

Prefer not to say

None of the above

Other (please specify):

Which of these other roles have you been paid for during the last 12 months? If you have not been paid for any of these, please select 'None of the above'.

Live sound engineering

Recording engineer

Music agency

Artist management

Promotion

Broadcasting

Journalism

Music Reviewing

Fundraising

Marketing and PR

Social media management

Administration or accountancy

Mentoring

Sighted guiding

Paid internship

None of the above

Other (please specify):

Your composition experience

Which of the following describe the type of composition work you have been paid for. Please select all that apply.

Composition for theatre

Composition for dance

Composition for film
Composition for TV/Radio
Composition for adverts
Composition for games
Other (please specify):

Your performance experience

Which of the following describe the type of performance work you have been paid for? Please select all that apply.

Solo live performance
Performances for theatre
Performances for dance
Performances for film
Performances for TV/Radio
Performances for adverts
Performing with a world music ensemble
Performing with a classical orchestra or ensemble
Performing with a pop or big band
Performing with a choir
Other (please specify):

Unpaid work and volunteering in music

On this page we ask about activities you have undertaken unpaid over the last 12 months.

Which of the following musical activities did you carry out as unpaid work during the last 12 months? This does not include activities done for leisure. If you have not carried out any of the following activities unpaid, please select 'None of the above'.

Solo recording artist
Session recording artist
Live performances
Instrumental or singing tutor
DJing (excluding radio DJing)
Sound recording and music production
Training others in music technology and/or music production
Composition
Musical arranging
Orchestra or ensemble conductor/lead
Prefer not to say
Other (please specify):
None of the above

Which of these other activities did you carry out as unpaid work during the last 12 months? This does not include activities done for leisure. If you have not carried out any of the following activities unpaid, please select 'None of the above'.

Live sound engineering

Recording engineer
Music agency
Artist management
Promotion
Broadcasting
Journalism
Music Reviewing
Fundraising
Marketing and PR
Social media management
Administration or accountancy
Mentoring
Sighted guiding
Internship
None of the above
Other (please specify):

Experiences of people not currently working in the music industry

This page asks you to think about your experiences as someone who does not currently work in the music industry.

What are the main reasons that you are not currently working in the music industry? Please select all the statements that apply to you from the following list. If there is another reason, please select 'Other' and provide details.

I have not been interested in developing a career in the music industry
I have not been able to find work within the music industry
I am retired
I have been focusing on a career outside the music industry
I have had opportunities to work in the industry, but these have fallen through at the last minute
I don't feel confident enough to pursue a career in the music industry
I have been focusing on my family and home life
I do not have the right skills to establish or progress in my chosen career in the industry
I do not think I would enjoy a career within the music industry
I used to work in the industry and I did not enjoy my work
I do not have enough contacts within the industry to secure regular employment
Prefer not to say
Other (please specify):

If you aspire to work in the music industry, what type of work or roles would you like to do? Please describe in the box below.

Employment outside the music industry

Have you been employed in a role outside the music industry over the last 12 months?

Yes, I have had one job outside the music industry over the last 12 months

Yes, I have had multiple jobs outside the music industry over the last 12 months

No

Prefer not to say

About your employment outside the music industry

Please indicate which of the following best describes your area (or areas) of work outside the music industry? Please select all that apply.

Art and the performing arts (e.g., artist or actor)

Arts and venue administration

Business and finance

Community and social services (e.g., disability or family services)

Computer and information technology (e.g., telecommunications or data processing)

Customer service and telecommunications

Facilities and operations (e.g., maintenance or cleaning)

Government and public administration

Health administration

Healthcare or therapy (e.g., counsellor or nurse)

Legal services

Leisure and recreation (e.g., tourism or sports centres)

Media and broadcasting

Personal care (e.g., fitness trainer or masseuse)

Retail and sales

Teaching and education (not including instrumental or vocal tuition)

Not applicable, I only work within the music-industry

Prefer not to say

Other (please specify):

Accessibility and inclusion within the music industry

This page asks questions about your experiences and opinions relating to accessibility and inclusion in the music industry.

Are there any musical activities that you would have liked to do over the last 12 months but felt unable to? What do you feel were the main reasons for this? Please provide details in the box below.

Thinking about your role as an employee and/or musician (including paid and unpaid work), please select the statement which best describes your experience or past experience of working and/or music-making alongside musicians and other professionals with visual impairment.

I work or used to work with musicians or other industry professionals with visual impairment all, or nearly all, of the time

I often work or worked with musicians or other industry professionals with visual impairment

I rarely work or worked with musicians or other industry professionals with visual impairment

I never work or worked with musicians or other industry professionals with visual impairment

Not applicable
I prefer not to say

If you have worked with other visually impaired professionals, what were their roles? Please select all that apply, or select 'Other' and provide details. If not applicable, please select 'Not Applicable'.

Music performer
Composer or producer
Leader or conductor of an ensemble
Head of an arts or performance company
Administrative and support role
Accounting and finance
Broadcasting
Sound engineering and production
Senior leadership and management
Prefer not to say
Not applicable
Other (please provide details):

Please indicate how satisfied you are with the following aspects of the music industry. Please select your answer on a scale ranging from 1, 'Very dissatisfied', to 5, 'Very satisfied'.

1 Very dissatisfied
2 Dissatisfied
3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4 Satisfied
5 Very satisfied
Prefer not to say
Not applicable

The availability of information about job opportunities
The variety of paid work available
Your ability to secure regular paid work
Your income from the music industry
The availability of leadership and management roles
The availability of training to support professional development
The availability of resources and information to support professional development
The availability of internships and professional development opportunities
The availability of networking opportunities

More on accessibility and inclusion within the music industry

This question is about reasonable adjustments, inclusion, access and support. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the following aspects of the music industry from 1, 'Very dissatisfied' to 5, 'Very satisfied'.

1 Very dissatisfied
2 Dissatisfied
3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

4 Satisfied

5 Very satisfied

Prefer not to say

Not applicable

Feeling welcomed by sighted people in the workplace

The support you receive from others with visual impairment in the industry

The attitudes of managers, promoters and agents towards people with visual impairment

The reasonable adjustments made by directors (e.g., ensemble conductors, studio managers)

The accessibility of physical environments that you work in or visit

The availability of musical scores in an accessible format

How easy it is to use music technologies relevant to your roles and activities

The support you receive from charities and organisations to progress your career

Your ability to travel to work locations

The cost of public transport

How easy it is to apply for the "Access to Work" scheme

What do you feel are the biggest challenges faced by people with visual impairment working in, or aspiring to work in, the music industry?

In what way, if any, do you feel the opportunities available to people with visual impairment in the music industry have changed over time?

What sources or types of support have been most helpful to your professional development?

Please reflect on your experience of using music technology and software in your current or past musical activities. This might include challenges or benefits relating to technology, or reflections on cost, availability, accessibility, or training.

What advice might you give to someone with visual impairment who is hoping to pursue a career in the music industry? This might include young people leaving education, or those hoping to transition to the industry from another career.

What types of support or activity would be most important to you in developing your confidence and abilities for the music industry? Please rate the importance of the following types of support or activity from 1 to 3, where 1 is 'Not at all important' and 3 is 'Very important'.

1 Not at all important

2 Quite important

3 Very important

Prefer not to say

Further musical training

Training in music technology

Training in song writing/composition

Administrative training
Career development support
More performance opportunities
Help with booking transport
Support from a stylist to develop physical presence for performances and media interaction
Support to develop verbal communication skills
Support to develop your ability to submit funding applications

If there are any other sources of support or activities that you would find helpful, please describe in the box below.

Your work as an employer, provider or other representative in the music industry

Please indicate if you currently have any of the following roles in the music industry as an employer, provider or other representative. Please tick all that apply from the list below. If you hold a different role, please select 'Other' and specify your role.

Programmer or manager of a music venue/festival
Chair or committee member for a musical festival
Chair or committee member for a music competition (e.g., Young Musician of the Year)
Management team for a record label or recording company
Senior leadership or manager of a booking agency
Artist agent or manager (including tour manager)
A&R (Artists & repertoire) for a record label or recording company
Booker (e.g., for venue or event)
Leadership for a commissioning body (e.g., Arts Council England)
Mainstream education provider
Education provider for individuals with a visual impairment (e.g., The Amber Trust)
Senior leadership or manager for a media or production company
Secretary or committee member for a union
Broadcaster or music journalist
Prefer not to say
Other (please specify):

Past experience of working with professionals who have VI

On this page, you'll be asked about your experience of working with or hiring people with visual impairment. Please remember your responses will be treated confidentially and there are no right or wrong answers.

Thinking about your role as an employer, provider, or other industry representative, approximately how many employees work (or worked, if you no longer work in the music industry) for your organisation? If you are not sure, please provide your best estimate.

Less than 10
11-20
21-50
51-100

Over 100 employees
Not applicable
Prefer not to say

How many people who are blind/severely sight impaired or partially sighted/sight impaired currently work (or worked, if you no longer work in the music industry) for your organisation? This includes people hired on a self-employed basis. Remember, these VIs cannot be corrected using glasses or contact lenses. If the answer is none, please enter '0'. You'll need to input an answer into each box to proceed; remember you can also enter 'Prefer not to say' or 'N/A'.

Number of blind/severely sight impaired employees
Number of partially sighted/sight impaired employees

How many individuals who are blind/severely sight impaired or partially sighted/sight impaired hold (or held, if you no longer work in the music industry) a management or leadership role in your organisation? If the answer is none, please enter '0' in the boxes below, or enter 'N/A'.

Number of blind/severely sight impaired employees
Number of partially sighted/sight impaired employees

Please select the statement which best describes your experience of working with, employing, or commissioning musicians and other professionals with visual impairment.

I have worked with, hired, employed, or commissioned musicians and other professionals with visual impairment all, or nearly all, of the time
I have often worked with, hired, employed, or commissioned musicians and other professionals with visual impairment
I have rarely worked with, hired, employed, or commissioned musicians or other professionals with visual impairment
I have never worked with, hired, employed, or commissioned musicians or other professionals with visual impairment
Not applicable
I prefer not to say

Please select the statement which best describes your experience of working with, hiring, employing, or commissioning visually impaired professionals from the UK and abroad, or select 'Not applicable'.

The majority of visually impaired professionals I have worked with, hired, employed, or commissioned have been UK-based
The majority of visually impaired professionals I have worked with, hired, employed, or commissioned have been based outside the UK
I have worked with, hired, employed, or commissioned a similar number of visually impaired professionals based abroad as based in the UK
Not applicable
Prefer not to say

Reasons you might not work with or employ professionals with VI

You indicated that you never or rarely work/worked with, hired, employed, or commissioned musicians or other industry professionals with visual

impairment. Please consider the following list of reasons why this might be the case and select all that apply to you. If you feel there is another reason, please select 'Other' and provide details.

I have rarely come across people with visual impairment in my field of work

My employers have never employed, hired, commissioned, or represented a person with VI

I have not come across a candidate with visual impairment who has an appropriate level of skill or training

I wouldn't know how to support an employee with visual impairment

I wouldn't have the financial means to provide adequate support to a person with visual impairment

I don't think that an individual with visual impairment would be successful in my field of work

I've have never thought about employing, hiring, commissioning, or representing a person with visual impairment

Prefer not to say

Other (please specify):

Hiring and working with professionals with visual impairment

Is your organisation, or the organisation you work or worked for, certified as part of the government's 'Disability Confident' scheme?

Yes

No

Not sure

Prefer not to say

Below is a list of statements relating to working with, hiring, employing, or commissioning people with visual impairment. Please indicate how confident you would feel doing the following things on a scale from 1, 'Not at all confident', to 3, 'Very confident'.

1 Not at all confident

2 Quite confident

3 Very confident

Not applicable

Prefer not to say

Hiring a person with visual impairment

Understanding the needs of employees and job candidates with visual impairment

*

Providing the right support to someone with visual impairment that works with, or for, me

Finding sources of help and information to support an employee or colleague with visual impairment

Ensuring recruitment materials such as application forms are accessible to visually impaired applicants

Using schemes such as Access to Work to support visually impaired people I employ, hire, or commission

Ensuring recruitment practises meet equality and diversity goals

Could you reflect on any challenges you feel are associated with hiring, commissioning, or representing a musician or other industry professional with visual impairment?

Could you reflect on any benefits you feel are associated with hiring, commissioning, or representing a musician or other industry professional with visual impairment?

Which of the following factors do you feel would best enable and encourage employers and providers in the music industry to employ or hire more blind or partially sighted people? Please rank the following factors in order of importance from 1, least important, to 6, most important. Please enter a number 1-6 for each item below (please use each number only once).

Government incentives (e.g., tax relief or wage subsidies) for employing individuals with visual impairment

Training course focusing on the needs and experiences of employees with visual impairment

A relationship with an organisation that could help recruit individuals with visual impairment

A review of your organisation's recruitment practice and policy

More information about schemes to support employees with visual impairment (e.g., Access to Work)

A relationship with an organisation that could provide practical guidance on accessibility of online and print materials

Please indicate which of the following sources of support or information you are familiar with (by familiar we mean you know the types of work they do and the support they provide), or select 'None of the above'. Remember, this is not a test, we simply want to find out how we can better support employers and providers to provide opportunities to individuals with visual impairment.

Access to Work

RNIB

Baluji Music Foundation and Inner Vision Orchestra

Thomas Pocklington Trust

Blind in Business

Private training and consultancy companies (e.g., Visualise)

Government website

'Disability confident' scheme and certification

Musicians' Union/The Royal Society of Musicians

British Paraorchestra

Travel Hands

None of the above

Other source of support or information (please specify):

Are there any other types of information, support, or materials you feel would increase employment and opportunities for individuals with visual impairment in the music industry?

Organisations and unions

Please indicate if you are a member of, used to be a member, or are involved with, any of the following organisations, unions, or ensembles. Please select all that apply, 'None of the above', or select 'Other' and provide details of any other relevant organisations.

Inner Vision Orchestra

The British Paraorchestra

Baluji Music Foundation

Extant

Disability Arts Online

Musicians' Union (MU)

Independent Society of Musicians (ISM), previously Incorporated Society of Musicians

Amber Trust

Drake Music

Shape Arts

Unlimited

Arts Council

RNIB

Vision Foundation

London Vision

None of the above

Prefer not to say

Other (please specify):

Inner Vision Orchestra (IVO) would like to understand more about their public reach and media presence. Please indicate which of the following activities you have done by selecting 'Yes' or 'No'.

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Attended an IVO concert in-person

Attended an IVO concert online

Listened to a radio broadcast featuring interviews with members from IVO

Read a newspaper or online article about IVO or its members

Watched a news feature or other television feature on IVO

Inner Vision Orchestra Experiences

On this page, you'll be asked questions about your interaction with Inner Vision Orchestra (IVO). Please remember, your responses will be written-up anonymously in any reporting and will help the IVO understand its impact on members, and how it might better support them in the future.

Which of the following activities have you done with the IVO?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Performed as a paid musician with the orchestra
Performed unpaid as an amateur music maker with the orchestra
Attended an IVO workshop
Delivered an IVO workshop
Recorded in a studio
Toured nationally
Toured internationally
Been interviewed by the media

If you have been hired to perform with the IVO, please indicate how many years and months you have been a member of the orchestra. If you're not sure, please provide your best estimate. Please enter years in the first box, and months in the second box. If you'd prefer not to say, please leave the boxes blank.

To what extent do you feel IVO has contributed to the following benefits? Please select your response on a scale from 1, 'Not at all', to 4, 'Very much so'.

1 Not at all
2 A little
3 Quite a lot
4 Very much so
Prefer not to say

Increased my confidence
Increased my well-being
Provided peer support/companionship
Developed my teamworking skills
Allowed me to learn new musical skills from different musical traditions
Developed my teaching and leadership skills
Developed my stage presentation skills
Developed my public communication skills
Allowed to me to work with people from different cultures and backgrounds
Developed my career

Please describe any other benefits of being part of IVO in the box below.

Have there been any challenges or difficulties relating to your time with the IVO?

If funding was available, what do you feel IVO could do to better support its musicians? Please rate the importance of the following types of support or activity from 1, 'Not important at all' to 3, 'Very important'.

1 Not important at all
2 Quite important
3 Very important

Prefer not to say

Regular paid rehearsals

More sighted guides

A permanent location for rehearsals and workshops

Provision of transport to and from IVO activities and performances

More recording opportunities

Please describe any other types of support or activity that would be helpful for IVO to provide in the box below.

Being an employer, provider, or other industry representative with visual impairment

This page asks you to reflect on your experiences of being an employer or provider with visual impairment.

What impact, if any, do you feel your visual impairment has had on your approach to others with visual impairment working, or aspiring to work, in the music industry?

What impact, if any, do you feel your visual impairment has had on the way others working in the music industry view your ability to fulfil your professional role or roles?

Any other reflections

We understand that it's sometimes hard to fit your responses into the boxes on a survey. If you have any other reflections you would like to share with the team, please do so here.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences? This might relate to challenges you have faced, support you have received, or the joys you have experienced making or working in music.

Thank you for taking part today

The next phase of the project is a series of semi-structured interviews with a small number of survey respondents. If you are happy to be contacted about being involved in an interview, please leave your contact details in the box below. Please press 'Next Page' to go to the final page, then click 'Finish Survey' to submit your responses.

Name

Email address and/or contact number

Appendix C – Demographic tables for full sampleTable 1. Location of respondents.

Country and region	Number of participants (N=109)	% of total sample (N=109)	% of region
England	98	89.91	-
East Midlands	3	2.75	3.06
East of England	5	4.59	5.10
London	48	44.04	48.98
North-East	1	0.92	1.02
North-West	7	6.42	7.14
South-East	15	13.76	15.31
South-West	5	4.59	5.10
West Midlands	6	5.50	6.12
Yorkshire and The Humber	7	6.42	7.14
Prefer not to say	1	0.92	1.02
Scotland	5	4.59	-
Central	1	0.92	20
Highlands and Hebrides	3	2.75	60
North-East	1	0.92	20
Wales	1	0.92	-
South Wales	1	0.92	100
Northern Ireland	2	1.83	-
Prefer not to say	3	2.75	-

Table 2. Demographics of full sample.

Age bracket (years)	Number of respondents (n= 90)	% of respondents
21-30	11	12.2
31-40	26	28.9
41-50	16	17.8
51-60	16	17.8
61-70	17	18.9
71<	4	4.4
Gender	Number of respondents (n= 109)	% of respondents
Female	50	45.87
Male	54	49.54
Other	1	0.92
Prefer not to say	4	3.67
Ethnicity	Number of respondents (n= 109)	% of respondents
White	76	69.72
Asian/Asian British	14	12.84
Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British	5	4.59
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	4	3.67
Arab	1	0.92
British Sri Lankan	1	0.92
Jewish	1	0.92
Latino	1	0.92
Scottish Gaelic	1	0.92
Prefer not to say	5	4.59

	Number of respondents (n=109)	% of respondents
Disability		
No disability (did not report a disability)	34	31.19
Disability	69	63.30
Prefer not to say	6	5.50
Type of disability		
Visual impairment	44	40.40
Hearing impairment	6	5.50
Physical disability	3	2.75
Chronic pain or pain related disorder	2	1.83
Mental health condition	13	11.93
Learning disabilities and/or Autism spectrum disorder (including Asperger's)	4	3.67
None of the above	40	36.7
Prefer not to say	6	5.50
Other	11 [Cancer and cancer treatment (n= 3); diabetes (n= 2); epilepsy (n= 2); kidney disease (n= 1); tinnitus (n= 1); ileostomy (n= 1); ovarian condition (n= 1)]	10.10
Number of disabilities		
None	40	36.70
1	47	43.12
2	12	11.01
3	3	2.75

Table 3. Roles in the industry.

	Number of respondents (n= 108)	% of respondents
I am currently hired by the music industry (this includes instrumentalists, singers, sound producers, composers, and music teachers)	44	40.74
I am an employer	16	14.81
I work in a subsidiary role to the music industry	8	7.41
I currently work both as an employee and as an employer or provider	15	13.89
I used to work in the music industry	6	5.56
I do not currently work in the music industry and I do not wish to	9	8.33
I do not currently work in the music industry but I would like to	10	9.26

Table 4. Time in the industry (or previously in the industry).

	Number of respondents (n= 89)	% of respondents
1-2 years	3	3.37
3-5 years	9	10.11
6-10 years	13	14.61
Over 10 years	62	69.66
Prefer not to say	2	2.25

Table 5. Membership of organisations, unions and ensembles in full sample and blind and visually impaired respondents.

	Number of respondents (n= 109)	% of respondents	Number of respondents with V.I. (n= 44)	% of respondents with V.I.
Inner Vision Orchestra	25	22.94	14	31.82
The British Paraorchestra	12	11.01	9	20.45
Baluji Music Foundation	27	24.78	13	29.55
Extant	7	6.42	5	11.36
Disability Arts Online	5	4.59	2	4.55
Musicians' Union	25	24.93	9	20.45
Independent Society of Musicians	14	12.84	6	13.64
Amber Trust	12	11.01	4	9.09
Drake Music	11	10.09	4	9.09
Shape Arts	2	1.84	2	4.55
Unlimited	7	6.42	3	6.82
Arts Council	18	16.51	4	9.09
RNIB	25	22.94	22	50
Vision Foundation	5	4.59	2	4.55
London Vision	6	5.50	5	11.36
None of the above	26	23.85	1	2.27
Prefer not to say	1	0.92	1	2.27
Other:				

Agma
Arts Council
Attitude is Everything
BAPAM (British Association for Performing Arts and Medicine)
DANK (Disabled Artists Network)
Drake Music
Equity
London Composer's Forum
London Piano Circle
London Symphony Orchestra
Music of Life Foundation
Musicians in Focus
Open Orchestras/Open Up Music
Performances for Blind Aid and National Federation of the Blind
Vision Foundation
Visually Impaired Musician's Association (no longer in existence)

Appendix D – Demographic tables for blind and visually impaired respondents

Table 6. Location of blind and blind and visually impaired respondents.

Country and region	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 44)	% of respondents	% of region
England	39	88.64	-
East Midlands	2	4.55	5.13
East of England	4	9.09	10.26
London	16	36.36	41.03
North-West	3	6.82	7.69
South-East	5	11.36	12.82
South-West	2	4.55	5.13
West Midlands	3	6.82	7.69
Yorkshire and The Humber	4	9.09	10.26
Scotland	2	4.55	-
Central	-	-	-
Highlands and Hebrides	1	2.27	50
North-East	1	2.27	50
Wales	1	2.27	-
South Wales	1	2.27	100
Northern Ireland	2	4.55	-

Table 7. Age, gender, and ethnicity of blind and visually impaired respondents.

Age bracket (years)	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 37)	% of respondents
21-30	6	16.22
31-40	12	32.43
41-50	8	21.62
51-60	4	10.81

61-70	4	10.81
71<	3	8.11
Gender	Number of respondents (n= 44)	% of respondents
Female	21	47.73
Male	23	52.27
Ethnicity	Number of respondents (n= 44)	% of respondents
White	30	68.18
Asian/Asian British	4	9.09
Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British	4	9.09
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	1	2.27
Arab	1	2.27
British Sri Lankan	1	2.27
Jewish	-	-
Latino	1	2.27
Scottish Gaelic	1	2.27
Prefer not to say	1	2.27

Table 8. Disabilities and health conditions of blind and visually impaired respondents.

	Number of respondents (n= 44)	% of respondents
Additional disability		
Hearing impairment	3	6.82
Physical disability	2	4.55
Chronic pain or pain related disorder	-	-
Mental health condition	5	11.36

Learning disabilities and/or Autism spectrum disorder (including Asperger's)	2	4.55
None of the above	-	-
Prefer not to say	-	-
Other disability or health condition	6	13.64
Number of disabilities (including VI)		
1	31	70.45
2	10	22.73
3	3	6.82

Appendix E - Nature of visual impairment and types of school attended

Table 9. Severity of visual impairment and time of onset.

	Number of respondents	% of respondents with V.I. (n= 44)	% of all respondents (N= 109)
Type of visual impairment			
I am registered severely sight impaired (blind)	37	84.09	33.94
I am registered sight impaired (partially sighted)	6	13.64	5.50
I have a visual impairment which is not registered	1	2.27	0.92
Time of onset			
Born with a V.I.	27	61.36	24.77
Developed V.I. before age 4	5	11.36	4.59
Developed V.I. aged 4 to 18 years	7	15.91	6.42
Developed V.I. aged 19 to 34 years	4	9.09	3.67

Table 10. Type of schools attended by blind and visually impaired respondents.

	Number of respondents	% of respondents with V.I. (n= 44)
Mainstream primary school with a specialist unit	1	0.92
Mainstream primary school with no specialist unit	21	19.27
Special primary school	14	12.84

Mainstream secondary school	23	21.10
Special secondary school	12	11.01
Mainstream sixth form or college	15	13.76
Special sixth form or college	8	7.34

Appendix F – Musical activities undertaken at school by blind and visually impaired respondents

Table 11. Musical activities at school for blind and visually impaired respondents.

		Number of respondents	% of respondents with V.I. onset before 18 (<i>n</i> = 39)
Learning to play an instrument	At school (during lessons)	24	61.54
	Extracurricular	25	64.1
Participating in a musical ensemble	At school (during lessons)	20	51.28
	Extracurricular	18	46.15
Learning musical theory	At school (during lessons)	22	56.41
	Extracurricular	20	51.28
Learning to read Braille music notation	At school (during lessons)	12	30.77
	Extracurricular	10	25.64
Learning to read score notation	At school (during lessons)	13	33.33
	Extracurricular	13	33.33

Using digital scores and notation software	At school (during lessons)	6	15.38
	Extracurricular	8	20.51
Learning how to use audio recording equipment	At school (during lessons)	11	28.21
	Extracurricular	16	41.03
Using music apps such as Garage Band or PocketBand	At school (during lessons)	4	10.26
	Extracurricular	7	17.95
Performing in a school show or production	At school (during lessons)	30	76.92
	Extracurricular	17	43.59

Table 12. Musical activities at school: Mainstream versus special school.

		Attended only mainstream education (<i>n</i> = 19)	Attended specialist institution at some point (<i>n</i> = 18)
		<i>n</i> = (%)	<i>n</i> = (%)
Learning an instrument	At school	11 (57.89)	13 (72.22)
	Extracurricular	13 (68.42)	10 (55.56)
Participating in a musical ensemble	At school	9 (47.37)	11 (61.11)
	Extracurricular	9 (47.37)	8 (44.44)
Learning musical theory	At school	12 (63.16)	10 (55.56)
	Extracurricular	11 (57.89)	7 (38.89)
Learning to read Braille music notation	At school	3 (15.79)	9 (50)
	Extracurricular	4 (21.05)	6 (33.33)
Learning to read score notation	At school	11 (57.89)	2 (11.11)
	Extracurricular	9 (47.37)	3 (16.67)
Using digital scores and notation software such as Sibelius or Finale	At school	6 (31.58)	-
	Extracurricular	6 (31.58)	1 (5.56)
Learning how to use audio recording equipment	At school	7 (36.84)	4 (22.22)
	Extracurricular	5 (26.32)	9 (50)
Using music apps such as Garage Band or PocketBand	At school	3 (15.79)	1 (5.56)
	Extracurricular	4 (21.05)	2 (11.11)
Performing in a school show or production	At school	14 (73.68)	15 (83.33)
	Extracurricular	9 (47.37)	8 (44.44)

Appendix G – Musical background of blind and visually impaired respondents

Table 13. Musical instruments played by blind and visually impaired respondents.

Instrument	Number of respondents (n= 44)
Piano and/or keyboard/synthesiser	24 (including organ: 2, harmonium: 1; synthesiser: 1)
Drums and percussion	13 (including tuned percussion: 2; and world music percussion: 2)
Violin/viola	3
String instruments from non-Western traditions	3
Guitar and bass guitar	12
Voice	23 (including traditional/world vocalists: 4)
Wind instruments	9 (including harmonica: 2)

Table 14. Formal musical training undertaken by blind and visually impaired respondents.

	Number of respondents	% of respondents with V.I. (n= 44)
Graded instrumental training, e.g., ABRSM or Trinity Music board examinations	27	61.36
Instrumental training from a conservatoire or other musical institution	15	34.09
An undergraduate performance-based degree	8	18.18
A postgraduate performance-based music degree	9	20.45

Workshop or short-course run by a music conservatoire or other musical institution	19	43.18
No formal musical training	6	13.64

Table 15. Experience of Braille music

	Number of respondents (n= 44)	% of respondents with V.I. (n= 44)
I am a fluent Braille music reader	7	15.91
I do not read Braille music	24	54.55
I have some experience of reading Braille music	11	25
Prefer not to say	2	4.55

Table 16. Funding and musical support for blind and visually impaired respondents.

	Number of respondents	% of respondents with V.I. (n= 44)
Elizabeth Eagle-Bott Memorial Fund	1	2.27
The Amber Trust	1	2.27
Youth Music's NextGen Fund	-	-
The Webster and Davidson Mortification for the Blind	-	-
Drake Music	3	6.81
Help Musicians	3	6.81
Shape Arts	1	2.27
Inner Vision Orchestra	8	18.18
British Paraorchestra	8	18.18
Arts Council	7	15.91

Your local authority or council	4	9.09
I have not received any support, opportunities or funding	18	40.91
Prefer not to say	-	-
Sight loss charity or other. Including...	10	-
RNIB Music Advisory Service	2	4.55
Able Artists Foundation	1	2.27
Walter Bergmann memorial Fund	1	2.27
Gatsby Trust (Sainsbury's Group)	1	2.27
Musicians in Focus	1	2.27
Snowdon Trust	1	2.27
Personalised payments under the Care and Support Act 2014 to attend one music course a year for professional development	1	2.27
Unlimited	1	2.27
Youth Music Incubator	1	2.27

Appendix H – Roles and time in the industry for blind and visually impaired respondents.

Table 17. Roles in the industry for blind and visually impaired respondents.

	Number of respondents (n= 43)	% of respondents
I am currently hired by the music industry (this includes instrumentalists, singers, sound producers, composers, and music teachers)	23	53.49
I am an employer	1	2.33
I work in a subsidiary role to the music industry	2	4.65
I currently work both as an employee and as an employer or provider	4	9.30
I used to work in the music industry	4	9.30
I do not currently work in the music industry and I do not wish to	3	6.98
I do not currently work in the music industry but I would like to	6	13.95

Table 18. Time in the industry (or previously in the industry) for blind and visually impaired respondents.

	Number of respondents with V.I. (n= 34)	% of respondents
1-2 years	2	5.88
3-5 years	2	5.88
6-10 years	4	11.76
Over 10 years	26	76.47

Table 19. Other industry roles held by blind and visually impaired respondents.

	Number of respondents (n= 36, not including N/A responses)	% of respondents
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Head of an arts or performance company	3	8.33
Administrative and support role	3	8.33
Accounting and finance	-	-
Broadcasting	5	13.89
Sound engineering and production	7	19.44
Senior leadership and management	1	2.78
Prefer not to say	1	2.78
Not applicable	8	-
Other: Music teacher	1	2.78

Table 20. Roles that blind and visually impaired respondents been paid/unpaid for over the last 12 months.

Musical roles				
	Paid		Unpaid	
	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 44)	% of respondents	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 44)	% of respondents
Solo recording artist	6	13.64	9	20.45
Session recording artist	4	9.09	3	9.09
Live performances	23	52.27	17	38.64
Instrumental or singing tutor	12	27.27	4	9.09
DJing (excluding radio DJing)	-	-	-	
Sound recording and music production	4	9.09	7	15.91

Training others in music technology and/or music production	3	6.82	5	11.36
Composition	5	11.36	9	20.45
Musical arranging	1	2.27	9	20.45
Busking	3	6.81	-	-
Ensemble lead	-	-	2	4.55
Prefer not to say	-	6.81	-	-
None of the above	3	6.81	16	36.36
Other paid musical work:				
<p>A few performances for the jubilee Curriculum Music Teacher I have had work as a consultant Not sure if in last 12 months but do occasional playing at weddings Teaching Braille music and musicianship Workshop leading in a variety of contexts Teaching piano improvisation</p>				
Other unpaid musical work:				
<p>I wrote and sang a jingle for a friend's radio show Live performance (was paid, but I waived my fee) Maintaining and developing musical practise Playing in church Playing at community day-centre (volunteering) Singing competitions (broadcast) Karaoke (using to secure work)</p>				
Other roles				
	Paid		Unpaid	
	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 44)	% of respondents	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 44)	% of respondents

Live sound engineering	1	2.27	1	2.27
Recording engineer	2	4.55	4	9.09
Music agency	-	-	-	
Artist management	-	-	1	2.27
Promotion	1	2.27	2	4.55
Broadcasting	1	2.27	3	6.81
Journalism	2	4.55	1	2.27
Music Reviewing	-	-	4	9.09
Fundraising	1	2.27	3	6.81
Marketing and PR	1	2.27	3	6.81
Social media management	1	2.27	5	11.36
Administration or accountancy	2	4.55	3	6.81
Mentoring	2	4.55	-	-
Sighted guiding	-	-	-	-
Paid internship	-	-	-	-
None of the above	21	47.73		

Other paid work:

All of the above relate to role as co-director of a music charity CEO and Creative Director of *Details removed* - I currently only receive payment when we are in a funded project. Between projects I have to work voluntarily to plan and write funding applications.
 Mixing and mastering engineer
 Research

Other unpaid work:

CEO and Creative Director of *Details removed* - I currently only receive payment when we are in a funded project.
Details removed website and social media. *Details removed* Copyright Campaign.

Table 21. Types of composition and performance work that blind and visually impaired respondents had been paid for over the last 12 months.

Paid for composition work (n= 5)		
	Number of respondents (n= 5)	% of respondents
Composition for theatre	2	40
Composition for dance	2	40
Composition for film	3	60
Composition for TV/Radio	3	60
Composition for adverts	-	-
Composition for games	1	20
Other, including:	-	-
"I undertook a composition degree and compose for small commissions"		
Paid for performance work		
	Number of respondents (n= 25)	% of respondents
Solo live performance	16	36.36
Performances for theatre	8	18.18
Performances for dance	3	6.82
Performances for film	3	6.82
Performances for TV/Radio	6	13.6
Performances for adverts	1	2.27
Performing with a world music ensemble	7	15.91

Performing with a classical orchestra or ensemble	8	18.18
Performing with a pop or big band	5	11.36
Performing with a choir	7	15.91
<p>Other, including: Paid work playing the piano at wedding reception Performing in a piano Duo Performing for a church ensemble, performing with an experimental music ensemble Performing for family audience Piano duo performances <i>Location removed</i> restaurant (background piano playing fortnightly). I receive full lunch and drinks (free). <i>Location removed</i> Community Centre fortnightly piano background (free lunch). <i>Name removed</i> Orchestra (monthly) including rehearsing for final evening concert at <i>Locations removed</i> - all travel expenses paid for <i>Details removed</i>.</p>		

Table 22. Previous work in the music industry for blind and visually impaired respondents.

	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 4)	% of respondents who had left the industry
Time since leaving the industry		
1-2 years ago	2	50
3-5 years ago	2	50
Role held in the industry		
I was hired by the music industry	2	50
I worked both as an employee and as an employer or provider of services	2	50
Musical roles		
Session recording artist	1	25
Live performances	3	75
Instrumental or singing tutor	1	25

Sound recording and music production	1	25
Musical arranging	1	25
Busking	1	25
Other:	1	25
Live Music Campaigner, Rehearsal/Recording Studio proprietor		
Leadership roles		
Other:	1	25
Director (Arts and Dance projects)		

Appendix I – Roles outside the industry, employment status, hours, income, and financial support for blind and visually impaired respondents.

Table 23. Employed or self-employed status, number of hours, income from the industry, and financial support/benefits for blind and visually impaired respondents.

Employment status		
	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 31)	% of respondents
I am employed	3	9.68
I am self-employed	18	58.06
I am both employed and self-employed	7	22.58
Average hours of employment per week		
	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 31)	% of respondents
Less than 24 hours (equivalent to 1-2 days of work a week)	15	48.39
24-34 hours (equivalent to 3-4 days of work a week)	10	32.26
35 hours or more (equivalent to full-time employment)	1	3.23
Prefer not to say	5	16.13
Income from the industry		
	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 31)	% of respondents
All of my income comes from work in the music industry	6	19.35
More than half but not all of my income comes from work in the music industry	5	16.13
Less than half of my income comes from work in the music industry	14	45.16

None of my income comes from work in the music industry	3	9.68
Prefer not to say	3	9.68
Receive financial support or benefit from the government		
	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 31)	% of respondents
No	6	19.35
Yes	25	80.65

Table 24. Employment outside the music industry over the last 12 months for blind and visually impaired sighted respondents.

	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 44)	% of respondents
Art and the performing arts (e.g., artist or actor)	2	4.55
Arts and venue administration	1	2.27
Business and finance	1	2.27
Community and social services (e.g., disability or family services)	4	9.09
Computer and information technology (e.g., telecommunications or data processing)	1	2.27
Customer service and telecommunications	1	2.27
Facilities and operations (e.g., maintenance or cleaning)	-	-
Government and public administration	3	6.82
Health administration	-	-
Healthcare or therapy (e.g., counsellor or nurse)	1	2.27

Legal services	-	-
Leisure and recreation (e.g., tourism or sports centres)	1	2.27
Media and broadcasting	4	9.09
Personal care (e.g., fitness trainer or masseuse)	-	-
Retail and sales	-	-
Teaching and education (not including instrumental or vocal tuition)	3	6.82
Prefer not to say	-	-
Other roles outside music:	5	11.36
Third sector organisation	2	4.55
Other:		
Academic Research I also work delivering webinars on disability awareness Psychotherapy- just starting out		

Appendix J – Working with others with visual impairment

Table 25. Number of blind and visually impaired respondents working alongside others with visual impairment.

	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 36, not including 'Not Applicable' responses)	% of respondents
I never work or worked with musicians or other industry professionals with visual impairment	3	8.33
I often work or worked with musicians or other industry professionals with visual impairment	11	30.56

I rarely work or worked with musicians or other industry professionals with visual impairment	15	41.67
I work or used to work with musicians or other industry professionals with visual impairment all, or nearly all, of the time	7	19.45
Not applicable	3	-

Appendix K – Experiences of blind and visually impaired respondents not currently working in the industry.

Table 26. Reasons for not currently working in the industry.

	Number of respondents (n= 25)	% of respondents
I have not been interested in developing a career in the music industry	1	4
I have not been able to find work within the music industry	4	16
I am retired	3	12
I have been focusing on a career outside the music industry	4	16
I have had opportunities to work in the industry, but these have fallen through at the last minute	-	-
I don't feel confident enough to pursue a career in the music industry	5	20
I have been focusing on my family and home life	1	4
I do not have the right skills to establish or progress in my chosen career in the industry	5	20
I do not think I would enjoy a career within the music industry	-	-
I used to work in the industry and I did not enjoy my work	-	-
I do not have enough contacts within the industry to secure regular employment	6	24
Prefer not to say	-	-

Other:
 Covid forced me into retirement from live work and my keyboard player died...
 Now there is no work but for certain bands who are 'connected'.
 Currently not working due to health.
 I have loved singing since I was a child, but was discouraged by family as I am
 also very academic so I was encouraged to do well at school instead.
 I need to find people who will take me on to play and gain confidence as I can't
 find the right groups to play or sing with.
 Tried to get a job in a studio; when I told the proprietor I was blind he laughed,
 asked if I was joking, then hung up.

Table 27. Aspirations of those not currently working in the industry but who would like to.

Composing, arranging, playing, recording, mixing, perhaps even get my own material noticed.
I like to write lyrics, compose top line melodies, jingles and stingers. I also love singing, so would love to do vocals on other people's tracks. I can produce music to some level, but would like to advance in that field too.
I would like to sing in a choir and play in a small ensemble
Session pianist, sound recording engineer, presenting
Singer
Singing

Appendix L – Access and inclusion: Experiences of blind and visually impaired respondents.

Table 29. Satisfaction with adjustments, inclusion, access, and support.

		Number of respondents	% of participants
Feeling welcomed by sighted people in the workplace (n= 36)	1 Very dissatisfied	4	11.11
	2 Dissatisfied	4	11.11
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	27.78
	4 Satisfied	8	22.22
	5 Very satisfied	10	27.78
	Not applicable	3	-
	Prefer not to say	-	-
The support you receive from others with visual impairment in the industry (n= 35)	1 Very dissatisfied	1	2.86
	2 Dissatisfied	2	5.71
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	28.57
	4 Satisfied	13	37.14
	5 Very satisfied	8	22.86
	Not applicable	4	-
	Prefer not to say	1	2.86
The attitudes of managers, promoters and agents towards people with visual impairment (n= 35)	1 Very dissatisfied	11	31.43
	2 Dissatisfied	7	20
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	8.57
	4 Satisfied	2	5.71
	5 Very satisfied	6	17.15
	Not applicable	4	-
	Prefer not to say	-	-
The reasonable adjustments made	1 Very dissatisfied	2	6.25
	2 Dissatisfied	8	25

by directors (e.g., conductors, studio managers) (<i>n</i> = 32)	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	25
	4 Satisfied	7	21.88
	5 Very satisfied	7	21.88
	Not applicable	7	-
	Prefer not to say	-	-
The accessibility of physical environments that you work in or visit (<i>n</i> = 37)	1 Very dissatisfied	2	5.41
	2 Dissatisfied	11	29.73
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13	35.14
	4 Satisfied	7	18.92
	5 Very satisfied	4	10.81
	Not applicable	2	5.41
	Prefer not to say	-	-
The availability of musical scores in an accessible format (<i>n</i> = 26)	1 Very dissatisfied	10	38.46
	2 Dissatisfied	5	19.23
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	7.69
	4 Satisfied	5	19.23
	5 Very satisfied	4	15.38
	Prefer not to say	-	-
	Not applicable	13	-
How easy it is to use music technologies relevant to your roles and activities (<i>n</i> = 33)	1 Very dissatisfied	5	15.15
	2 Dissatisfied	9	27.27
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5	15.15
	4 Satisfied	10	30.30
	5 Very satisfied	4	12.12
	Prefer not to say	-	-
	Not applicable	6	-
The support you receive from	1 Very dissatisfied	3	9.09
	2 Dissatisfied	3	9.09

charities and organisations to progress your career (<i>n</i> = 33)	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12	36.36
	4 Satisfied	13	39.39
	5 Very satisfied	2	6.06
	Prefer not to say	-	-
	Not applicable	6	-
Your ability to travel to work locations (<i>n</i> = 33)	1 Very dissatisfied	7	21.21
	2 Dissatisfied	5	15.15
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	21.21
	4 Satisfied	8	24.24
	5 Very satisfied	6	18.18
	Prefer not to say	-	-
	Not applicable	6	-
The cost of public transport (<i>n</i> = 32)	1 Very dissatisfied	2	6.25
	2 Dissatisfied	10	31.25
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	28.16
	4 Satisfied	7	21.88
	5 Very satisfied	4	12.50
	Prefer not to say	-	-
	Not applicable	7	-
How easy it is to apply for the "Access to Work" scheme (<i>n</i> = 27)	1 Very dissatisfied	10	37.04
	2 Dissatisfied	6	22.22
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	14.81
	4 Satisfied	5	18.52
	5 Very satisfied	1	3.70
	Prefer not to say	1	3.70
	Not applicable	12	-

Table 30. Satisfaction with different aspects of the music industry.

		Number of respondents	% of respondents
The availability of information about job opportunities (n= 39)	1 Very dissatisfied	9	23.08
	2 Dissatisfied	9	5.13
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11	23.21
	4 Satisfied	2	5.13
	5 Very satisfied	3	7.69
	Not applicable	5	-
	Prefer not to say	-	-
The variety of paid work available (n= 31)	1 Very dissatisfied	10	32.26
	2 Dissatisfied	6	19.35
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	29.03
	4 Satisfied	6	19.35
	5 Very satisfied	2	6.45
	Not applicable	5	-
	Prefer not to say	1	3.23
Your ability to secure regular paid work (n= 31)	1 Very dissatisfied	12	38.71
	2 Dissatisfied	7	22.58
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	12.90
	4 Satisfied	6	19.35
	5 Very satisfied	2	6.45
	Not applicable	8	-
	Prefer not to say	-	-
Your income from the music industry (n= 31)	1 Very dissatisfied	9	29.03
	2 Dissatisfied	9	29.03
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	12.90
	4 Satisfied	6	19.35

	5 Very satisfied	2	6.45
	Not applicable	8	-
	Prefer not to say	1	3.23
The availability of leadership and management roles (<i>n</i> = 25)	1 Very dissatisfied	8	32
	2 Dissatisfied	6	24
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	32
	4 Satisfied	-	-
	5 Very satisfied	3	12
	Not applicable	15	-
	Prefer not to say	-	-
The availability of training to support professional development (<i>n</i> = 34)	1 Very dissatisfied	4	11.76
	2 Dissatisfied	15	44.12
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	26.47
	4 Satisfied	4	11.76
	5 Very satisfied	2	5.88
	Prefer not to say	-	-
	Not applicable	5	-
The availability of resources and information to support professional development (<i>n</i> = 35)	1 Very dissatisfied	10	28.57
	2 Dissatisfied	7	20
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	28.57
	4 Satisfied	7	20
	5 Very satisfied	1	2.86
	Prefer not to say	1	2.86
	Not applicable	4	-
The availability of internships and professional development opportunities (<i>n</i> = 28)	1 Very dissatisfied	7	25
	2 Dissatisfied	8	28.57
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	35.71
	4 Satisfied	3	10.71

	5 Very satisfied	-	-
	Prefer not to say	-	-
	Not applicable	11	-
The availability of networking opportunities (n= 35)	1 Very dissatisfied	7	20
	2 Dissatisfied	13	37.14
	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	20
	4 Satisfied	8	22.86
	5 Very satisfied	-	-
	Prefer not to say	-	-
	Not applicable	4	-

Table 31. Themes from open-ended responses about difficulties accessing musical activities over the last 12 months.

n= 28	Number of times mentioned
Not enough industry connections and/or networking difficulties	6
Difficulty securing performance or other musical opportunities	4
Additional disability or comorbid condition/symptoms	3
Discriminatory attitudes towards V.I.	3
Inaccessible technology	2
Don't read Braille music or score notation	2
Other work limiting hours in music	2
Continued impact of COVID on the industry	2
V.I. makes it hard to accept last minute work/changes and manage workload (things take longer)	2
Travel, transport issues, independent mobility	2
Cost and availability of appropriate training courses	2
Lack of space or equipment at home	2

Deteriorating sight	2
V.I. limiting ability to work more hours	1
Cost or difficulty securing a PA	1
Not meeting minimum income for Access to Work	1
Lacking technological skills	1
Lack of manager or agent (or difficulty finding one)	1
Lack of financial support to pursue activities and/or progress	1
Out of practise	1
Family or person commitments	1
Not got the right support	1

Table 32. Themes from open-ended responses about technological experiences.

Theme	Number of times mentioned
Positive impacts of technology	11
Cost of technology	11
Inaccessible technology, plugins and software	8
Finding someone to provide technological support	5
Some plugins and software inaccessible	3
Perception of accessibility being a low priority	2
Outdated modes of technology	2
Use of magnification	2
Hard to find accessible training materials	2
Challenge of learning how to use technology	2
Unclear if products are accessible before buying	1
Social media difficulties	1
Not knowing where to find out about technology	1
Latency with some software	1

Hard to keep up with technology	1
Feeling confined by technology	1
Access to work funding technology	1
Additional practical considerations for some technology (screen readers on stage)	1

Appendix M – Satisfaction and importance of different types of career support for blind and visually impaired respondents.

Table 33. Satisfaction with careers support during musical studies.

	Number of respondents (n= 44)	% of respondents
1 Very dissatisfied	6	13.64
2 Dissatisfied	7	15.91
3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11	25
4 Satisfied	4	9.09
5 Very satisfied	3	6.82
Not applicable	13	29.55

Table 34. Themes from open-ended responses about careers advice.

Missing advice	Number of times mentioned
● Not received any advice	6
● Lack of VI-specific knowledge	3
● Lack of skill development	1
● Difficult to access support for unique styles	1
● Focus on performance only at school	1
● Feels like lack of advice hindered progress	1
Discouraged	
● Discouraged- find a 'proper' job	3
● Discouraged- too difficult with V.I.	1
● Discouraged- not good enough	1
● Braille music discouraged at school	1
● Music not a suggested career option at school	1
● Other degrees encouraged	1

Help and support	
● Formal professional development during HE	2
● Advice from sight loss charity	1
● Chance support from individual	1
● General careers advice	1
● Disability-specific careers advice	1

Table 35. How blind and visually impaired professionals find out about work opportunities.

	Number of respondents (n= 44)	% of respondents
Word-of-mouth	25	56.82
A disability-focused organisation or charity	15	34.09
Online searching	12	27.27
An agency	4	9.09
A manager	2	4.55

Table 36. Perceived importance of different sources of support and help.

		Number of respondents	% of respondents
Further musical training (n= 33, excluding PNS)	1 Not at all important	7	20.59
	2 Quite important	8	23.53
	3 Very important	18	52.94
	Prefer not to say	1	-
Training in music technology (n= 34)	1 Not at all important	7	20.59
	2 Quite important	11	32.35
	3 Very important	16	47.06
	Prefer not to say	-	-
	1 Not at all important	16	47.06

Training in song writing/composition (<i>n</i> = 34)	2 Quite important	7	20.59
	3 Very important	11	32.35
	Prefer not to say	-	-
Administrative training (<i>n</i> = 34)	1 Not at all important	14	41.18
	2 Quite important	10	29.41
	3 Very important	10	29.41
	Prefer not to say	-	-
Career development support (<i>n</i> = 33, excluding PNS)	1 Not at all important	6	17.65
	2 Quite important	8	23.53
	3 Very important	19	55.88
	Prefer not to say	1	-
More performance opportunities (<i>n</i> = 34)	1 Not at all important	3	8.82
	2 Quite important	9	26.47
	3 Very important	22	64.71
	Prefer not to say	-	-
Help with booking transport (<i>n</i> = 34)	1 Not at all important	7	20.59
	2 Quite important	7	20.59
	3 Very important	20	58.82
	Prefer not to say	-	-
Support from a stylist to develop physical presence for performances and media interaction (<i>n</i> = 33, excluding PNS)	1 Not at all important	7	20.59
	2 Quite important	7	20.59
	3 Very important	19	55.88
	Prefer not to say	1	-
	1 Not at all important	10	29.41

Support to develop verbal communication skills (n= 34)	2 Quite important	9	26.47
	3 Very important	15	44.12
	Prefer not to say	-	-
Support to develop your ability to submit funding applications (n= 34)	1 Not at all important	7	20.59
	2 Quite important	10	29.41
	3 Very important	17	20.59
	Prefer not to say	-	-
<p>Other sources of help and support sought:</p> <p>Access to work support</p> <p>Disability and V.I. awareness training for others</p> <p>Skill development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How to run workshops ● The practicalities of busking (keeping an eye on money) <p>Career progression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshops with industry professionals ● Funding for training and education ● Networking support ● Professional representation ● Support finding opportunities <p>PA support and transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Admin support ● Someone to drive ● Financial support for transport and/or PA ● Navigation support at venues 			

Table 37. Mean ratings of the importance of different types of support from lowest to highest rated item.

Types of support	Mean rating (SD)
More performance opportunities	2.56 (0.66)
Career development support	2.39 (0.78)
Help with booking transport	2.38 (0.82)
Support from a stylist to develop physical presence for performances and media interaction	2.36 (0.82)

Further musical training	2.33 (0.82)
Support to develop your ability to submit funding applications	2.29 (0.80)
Training in music technology	2.26 (0.79)
Support to develop verbal communication skills	2.15 (0.86)
Administrative training	1.88 (0.84)
Training in song writing/composition	1.85 (0.89)

Appendix N - Public engagement with Inner Vision OrchestraTable 38. Engagement with public and media activities for Inner Vision Orchestra.

Type of engagement with IVO	Number of all respondents (n= 109)	% of respondents	Number of respondents with V.I. (n= 44)	% of respondents with V.I.
Attended an IVO concert in-person	40	36.70	16	36.36
Attended an IVO concert online	30	27.52	15	34.09
Listened to a radio broadcast featuring interviews with members from IVO	39	35.78	17	38.64
Read a newspaper or online article about IVO or its members	43	39.45	15	34.09
Watched a news feature or other television feature on IVO	34	31.19	10	22.73

Appendix O – Experiences of Inner Vision Orchestra members

Table 39. Time with Inner Vision Orchestra and activities undertaken.

Time as a member of the IVO (responses from IVO members, $n= 14$)		
	Number of respondents	% of respondents ($n= 13$ valid responses)
Less than a year	1	7.69
1-2 years	3	23.08
3-4 years	1	7.69
5-6 years	-	-
7-8 years	2	15.38
9-10 years	2	15.38
Over 10 years	4	30.77
Missing	1	7.69
Activities undertaken with IVO		
	Number of respondents	% of respondents ($n= 14$)
Performed as a paid musician with the orchestra	14	100
Performed unpaid as an amateur music maker with the orchestra	4	28.57
Attended an IVO workshop	12	85.71
Delivered an IVO workshop	8	57.14
Recorded in a studio	10	71.43
Toured nationally	11	78.57
Toured internationally	4	28.57
Been interviewed by the media	9	64.29

Table 40. Benefits of being part of Inner Vision Orchestra.

	Number of respondents % of respondents (n= 14)			
	Not at all	A little	Quite a lot	Very much so
Increased my confidence	-	1 7.14	1 7.14	12 85.71
Increased my well-being	-	3 21.43	4 28.57	7 50
Provided peer support/companionship	-	-	5 35.71	9 64.29
Developed my teamworking skills	1 7.14	1 7.14	4 28.57	8 57.14
Allowed me to learn new musical skills from different musical traditions	-	1 7.14	1 7.14	12 85.71
Developed my teaching and leadership skills	2	1 7.14	3 21.43	8 57.14
Developed my stage presentation skills	1 7.14	3 21.43	1 7.14	9 64.29
Developed my public communication skills	4 28.57	1 7.14	3 21.43	6 42.86
Allowed to me to work with people from different cultures and backgrounds	-	-	1 7.14	13 92.86
Developed my career	1 7.14	-	8 57.14	5 35.71
Other:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enjoyment (n= 1) ● Accommodation of health needs (flexibility) (n= 1) ● Opportunities to improvise (n= 1) ● Having own compositions performed (n= 2) ● Making contacts in the industry (n= 1) ● Paid performance opportunities (n= 1) ● Social (n= 1) 				

Table 41. Types of support that Inner Vision Orchestra members would find most useful.

	Number of respondents % of respondents (n= 14)		
	Not at all important	Quite important	Very important
Regular paid rehearsals	2 14.29	3 21.43	9 64.29
More sighted guides	1 7.14	4 28.57	9 64.29
A permanent location for rehearsals and workshops	- -	6 42.86	8 57.14
Provision of transport to and from IVO activities and performances	5 35.71	8 57.14	1 7.14
More recording opportunities	1 7.14	5 35.71	8 57.14
Other:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bigger funding, admin and marketing team ● Personal Assistants for all performers (“We need PAs not sighted guides, it feels like there's only so much you can ask a sighted guide to do for you. PAs give us confidence to be the best version of ourselves”) ● Rehearsals even when not preparing for an upcoming performance ● Make-up provision for performances ● Food and drink provision before performances (“The option for this would be good, especially if you've got people travelling a distance”) ● Proper PA (Public Address) system ● Support for training ● Weekend and online rehearsals for people not primarily working in music and those who are not based in London 			

Appendix P – Background of organisations and employers, providers, and respondents in subsidiary roles

Table 42. Roles held by employers, providers, and those in subsidiary roles.

	All employers, providers or those in subsidiary roles (n=39)		Employers, providers or those in subsidiary roles with VI (N= 7)	
	Number of respondents	% of all employers	Number of respondents	% of VI employers
Programmer or manager of a music venue/festival	11	28.21	1	14.29
Chair or committee member for a musical festival	2	5.13	-	-
Chair or committee member for a music competition (e.g., Young Musician of the Year)	2	5.13	-	-
Management team for a record label or recording company	1	2.56	-	-
Senior leadership or manager of a booking agency	5	12.82	-	-
Artist agent or manager (including tour manager)	11	28.21	1	14.29
A&R (Artists & repertoire) for a record label or recording company	2	5.13	-	-
Booker (e.g., for venue or event)	8	20.51	-	-
Leadership for a commissioning body	2	5.13	-	-

(e.g., Arts Council England)				
Mainstream education provider	5	12.82	2	28.57
Education provider for individuals with a visual impairment	4	10.26	3	42.86
Senior leadership or manager for a media or production company	-	-	-	-
Secretary or committee member for a union	1	2.56	1	14.29
Broadcaster or music journalist	1	2.56	1	14.29
Prefer not to say	1	2.56	1	14.29
Other:				
Charity director, trustee, leadership	5	12.82	2	28.57
Orchestral director, management or committee member	4	10.26	-	-
Composer, performer, producer, content creator	3	7.69	1	14.29
Artistic or creative director	2	5.13	1	14.29
Director, manager or leadership for other professional association	2	5.13	-	-
A&R for Music Publisher	1	2.56	-	-
Access Support Worker for Artists	1	2.56	-	-

Researcher	1	2.56	-	-
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Table 43. Size of organisations represented in the sample.

Size of organisation	Number of respondents (n= 35, 29 excluding N/A responses)	% of organisations
Less than 10 employees	17	58.62
11-20 employees	2	6.90
21-50	6	20.69
51-100	3	10.34
Prefer not to say	1	3.45
Not applicable	6	-

Appendix Q – Experiences of employing blind and visually impaired professionals.

Table 44. Number of severely sight impaired (blind) employees.

Number of severely sight impaired (blind) employees	Number of respondents (n=39, 36 excluding N/A responses)	% of organisations	Number of respondents (n=7, 6 excluding N/A responses)	% of organisations
0	23	63.89	5	83.33
1-5	10	27.78	-	-
6-15	1	2.78	-	-
16-30	1	2.78	1	16.67
Don't know	1	2.78	-	-
Not applicable	3	2.78	2	-

Table 45. Number of sight impaired (partially sighted) employees.

Number of severely sight impaired (blind) employees	Number of respondents (n=39, 36 excluding N/A responses)	% of organisations	Number of respondents with V.I. (n=8, 6 excluding N/A responses)	% of organisations
0	27	75	3	50
1-5	8	22.22	3	50
6-15	-	-	-	-
16-30	-	-	-	-
Don't know	1	2.77	-	-
Not applicable	3	-	2	-

Table 46. Frequency with which employers worked with blind and visually impaired people.

Frequency	Number of employers (n=40, 36 excluding N/A)	% of employers	Number of employers with V.I. (n= 8, 4 excluding N/A)	% of employers
All, or nearly all, of the time	4	11.11	-	-
Often	10	27.78	3	75
Rarely	15	41.67	1	25
Never	6	16.67	-	-
Prefer not to say	1	2.78	-	-
Not applicable	4	-	4	-

Table 47. Number of severely sight impaired and sight impaired employees in leadership roles.

Number of severely sight impaired (blind) employees	Number of respondents (n=40, 38 excluding N/A responses)	% of respondents	Number of respondents with V.I. (n=, 7 excluding N/A responses)	% of respondents with V.I.
0	32	84.2	6	85.71
1-5	5	13.16	1	14.29
Don't know	1	2.63	-	-
Not applicable	2	-	1	-
Number of sight impaired (partially sighted) employees	Number of respondents (n=40, 38 excluding N/A responses)	% of organisations		
0	30	78.95	5	71.43
1-5	7	18.42	2	28.57
Don't know	1	2.63	-	-
Not applicable	2	-	1	-

Table 48. Location of blind and visually impaired professionals with whom employers/stakeholders had worked.

Location of professionals with V.I.	Number of employers (n=40, 28 excluding N/A)	% of employers	Number of employers with V.I. (n= 4)	% of employers
Majority UK-based	25	89.29	4	100
Majority from abroad	-	-	-	-
Similar numbers from abroad as the UK	2	7.14	-	-
Prefer not to say	1	3.57		-
Not applicable	12	-	4	-

Table 49. Reasons given for not employing, hiring, or commissioning blind and visually impaired professionals.

Reason employer had not worked with blind and visually impaired professional	Number of employers who rarely or never worked with blind and visually impaired professionals I (n= 21)	% of employers
I have rarely come across people with visual impairment in my field of work	19	90.48
My employers have never employed, hired, commissioned, or represented a person with VI	2	9.52
I have not come across a candidate with visual impairment who has an appropriate level of skill or training	1	4.76
I wouldn't know how to support an employee with visual impairment	-	-
I wouldn't have the financial means to provide adequate support to a person with visual impairment	1	4.76

I don't think that an individual with visual impairment would be successful in my field of work	1	4.76
I've have never thought about employing, hiring, commissioning, or representing a person with visual impairment	-	-
Prefer not to say	-	-
Not applicable	-	-
Other:		
I have worked with visually impaired/ blind people within my work, but very few in the greater scheme of things. In my previous job we were able to secure funding for a targeted commission to support a placement for a visually impaired/ blind candidate to begin to address this imbalance.		
I work freelance, the decisions of who is being employed is usually decided by the employer contracting me. However I have worked with people who are blind/have visual impairments in various projects that I have been hired for on a freelance basis.		
We have never had anyone apply for a position		

Table 50. Confidence in hiring, supporting, and working with blind and visually impaired professionals.

	Number of responses (% of responses)				
	Not at all confident	Quite confident	Very confident	Prefer not to say	N/A
Hiring a person with visual impairment (<i>n</i> = 30)	3 (10)	12 (40)	14 (46.67)	1 (3.33)	-
Understanding the needs of employees and job candidates with visual impairment (<i>n</i> = 30)	6 (20)	15 (50)	8 (26.67)	1 (3.33)	-
Providing the right support to someone with visual impairment that works with, or for, me (<i>n</i> = 30)	5 (16.67)	20 (66.67)	5 (16.67)	-	-

Finding sources of help and information to support an employee or colleague with visual impairment (<i>n</i> = 29, excluding N/A)	7 (23.33)	16 (53.33)	6 (20)	-	1
Ensuring recruitment materials such as application forms are accessible to visually impaired applicants (<i>n</i> = 29, excluding N/A)	10 (33.33)	10 (33.33)	9 (30)	-	1
Using schemes such as Access to Work to support visually impaired people I employ, hire, or commission (<i>n</i> = 27, excluding N/A)	10 (33.33)	10 (33.33)	7 (23.33)	-	3
Ensuring recruitment practises meet equality and diversity goals (<i>n</i> = 29, excluding N/A)	2 (6.67)	13 (43.33)	13 (43.33)	1 (3.33)	1

Table 51. Employers reporting certification with the 'Disability Confident' scheme.

Is your organisation, or the organisation you work or worked for, certified as part of the government's 'Disability Confident' scheme?	Number of respondents (<i>n</i> = 30)	% of respondents
Yes	3	10
No	16	53.33
Not sure	10	33.33
Prefer not to say	1	3.33

Appendix R – Perceptions of employing, hiring or commissioning blind and visually impaired people

Table 52. Challenges and benefits of employing, hiring, or commissioning blind and visually impaired people (themes from open-ended responses).

Challenges	Benefits
<p>Support and finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Difficulties accessing adequate support from Access to Work ● Concerns about finance or resource to support employees with V.I. 	<p>Industry diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diversity of perspectives and experience ● Access to talent ● 'Special' talent (perceptions about greater listening abilities, ability to
<p>Physical environments and travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Needing to ensure the accessibility of physical spaces ● Health and safety concerns ● Difficulties with transport and getting to venues 	<p>Benefits to professionals with V.I. and disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greater understanding of the needs of people with V.I. ● Well being and health benefits
<p>Performance and music-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Performers required to learn by memory ● Physicality of a performance space and working with others ● A lack of visual aspects during the teaching experience 	<p>Public and audience benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changing workplace and public perceptions of disability ● Increase in audience size and diversity ● Representation of V.I. and disability ● Positive influence on practice and policy
<p>Other concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment (“Access to the right recruitment tools”) ● Inaccessible technology or resources ● A presence of good intentions but these not always being acted on ● Lack of prior experience of working with people with V.I. ● Support of other disabilities tending to gain greater focus 	

Table 53. Factors felt to enable and encourage the hiring and employment of blind and visually impaired professionals, ranked by importance.

	Number of respondents % of respondents (n= 20)					
	Ranking of important from 1 (Most important) to 6 (least important)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Government incentives (e.g., tax relief or wage subsidies) for employing individuals with visual impairment	6 30%	3 15%	1 5%	4 20%	1 5%	5 25%
Training course focusing on the needs and experiences of employees with visual impairment	3 15%	1 5%	4 20%	5 25%	3 15%	4 20%
A relationship with an organisation that could help recruit individuals with visual impairment	4 20%	5 25%	2 10%	2 10%	7 35%	-
A review of your organisation's recruitment practice and policy	6 30%	2 10%	3 15%	3 15%	2 20%	4 20%
More information about schemes to support employees with visual impairment (e.g., Access to Work)	4 20%	2 10%	5 25%	2 10%	5 25%	2 10%
A relationship with an organisation that could provide practical guidance on accessibility of online and print materials	4 20%	3 15%	8 40%	1 5%	-	4 20%

Table 54. Sources of support and information that employers were familiar with.

	Number of employers (n= 20)	% of employers
Access to Work	17	85
RNIB	17	85

Baluji Music Foundation and Inner Vision Orchestra	14	70
Thomas Pocklington Trust	5	25
Blind in Business	3	15
Private training and consultancy companies (e.g., Visualise)	4	20
Government website	7	35
'Disability confident' scheme and certification	5	25
Musicians' Union/The Royal Society of Musicians	18	90
British Paraorchestra	13	65
Travel Hands	1	5
None of the above	3	15
<p>Other:</p> <p>Blind and visually impaired freelancers that I work with or support</p> <p>Live Music Now</p> <p>Making Music</p>		

Appendix S – Advice from blind and visually impaired respondents

Table 55. Advice to others with V.I. working, or hoping to work, in the music industry (*n*= 31).

Access and Inclusion	Accessing support	Communicate your needs clearly- you are the expert
		Find peer support
		Get support for admin and legal matters
		Make your voice heard
		Seek out available support
		Types of specific support/organisations
	There may be challenges	Acknowledge that some inaccessibility may always be present
		Importance of practical support- travel, transport, Access to Work
		Share difficulties with those close to you
		That sighted and non-sighted people all experience challenges
		There may be more work involved to do the same job as others
Musical life and career	Expectation versus reality	A degree doesn't guarantee a career
		The industry may not provide regular work
	Experience and opportunities	All experience is useful, even if unpaid
		Do the work that feels right to you
		Take advantage of opportunities targeted at young people
	Skills for the industry	Have a high level of musical skill
		Engage with social media
		Importance of presentation and communication skills
		Importance of working with others, not just competing
		Learn Braille music

Attitudes and approach	Be confident
	Be persistent, despite set backs
	Focus on skills not VI
	Be a problem solver
	Look after your mind and body
	Make your voice heard
	A career in music is possible
	You can learn from the good and bad experiences
Technology	Recommended technology
	Training in music technology
	You can do anything now with technology