

BPI hosts its inaugural Diversity & Inclusion Forum

Attitudes and issues around diversity in the workplace and harassment explored and discussed



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The BPI, yesterday hosted its inaugural *BPI Diversity & Inclusion Forum*, which saw speakers drawn from a range of sectors across the music industry explore and discuss workplace issues and developments around diversity and harassment.

The event was chaired by BPI consultant **Ayesha Hazarika** and opened with words of welcome from BPI Chairman **Ged Doherty**, who has led much of the work for the BPI and BRIT Awards to promote greater diversity within the industry.

BPI & BRIT Awards Chief Executive **Geoff Taylor** gave an introductory address which, whilst highlighting the work that still needs to be done, gave examples of encouraging progress that is being made such as through recent changes to The BRITs Voting Academy and the resulting impact this is having on BRITs nominations; UK Music's Diversity taskforce and annual workforce survey; and The BRITs Apprentice Scheme launched earlier this year.

Presentations were then given by an all-women panel as follows:

- **Ayesha Hazarika** explained why the BPI was hosting the event for its label members and other industry representatives and set out the issues and areas that need to be addressed.
- UK Music's **Ele Hill** gave an update on the trade body's Diversity Taskforce and annual workplace survey - which is due to publish its next results, covering 2018, later this year.
- Proper Music Distribution's Head of Digital, **Kameil Sattar**, described the award-winning work by the organisation to actively promote and encourage diversity among its workforce - recognised by the 2017 Music Week Women in Music Awards, when Proper received the *Company Award for Diversity in the Workplace*.
- Communications Consultant **Claire Singers** outlined the extensive benefits of *Smart Working* in driving the success and efficiency of companies by facilitating a more diverse and inclusive organisational workforce.

- **Jane Russell**, Barrister at Essex Court Chambers and senior counsel specialising in complex litigation, spoke powerfully on equality and discrimination rights, employer legal obligations and the courses of action available to individuals.
- **Vanessa Higgins**, CEO Regent Street Records and BPI independent label Council member, summarised the various positions and arguments put forward and set out next steps for the attendees to consider following on from the forum.

BPI Consultant Ayesha Hazarika said: *“We are grateful to all the speakers for their time and to everyone who made this event possible and who attended and contributed so enthusiastically. The feedback so far has been excellent – people felt the discussion was informative and inspiring as well as being fun, and a great networking opportunity too.*

“We are seeing encouraging signs of attitudes and approaches beginning to shift – suggesting that tangible progress on issues such as diversity and harassment in the workplace is finally being made. But there is clearly still a long way to go and the challenge now is to build on this momentum and on the impetus provided by movements such as TIME’S UP and #MeToo so that we avoid yet another false dawn and help to deliver truly lasting and sustainable change.”

The BPI plans to host more of its *BPI Diversity & Inclusion Forums* in future so that it can continue this important conversation.

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Enquiries

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About the BPI (British Phonographic Industry) *Promoting British Music*

BPI champions the UK’s recorded music industry, safeguarding the rights of its members and of the artists, performers and label members of collecting body PPL. BPI’s membership consists of over 400 independent labels and the UK’s three ‘majors’, which account for 85 per cent of legitimate domestic music consumption.

BPI promotes British music overseas through its trade missions and the Music Exports Growth Scheme. It provides insights, training and networking with its free masterclasses, Innovation Hub, Insight Sessions, and reports. The BPI administers the Certified Awards, co-owns the Official Charts, organises The BRIT Awards and is also home to the Mercury Prize.