REMAP:

Reporting on the Creative and Professional Experiences of Black Music Makers and Practitioners Living and Working in the Liverpool City Region

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

Liverpool City Region // Music Board

ONRECORD

NOTHIN BUT THE MUSIC
BY YAW OWUSU

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FOREWORD

This report is part of a wider process that is working towards the creation of a Black music infrastructure that represents and services the Black music creatives and Black industry professionals working across the Liverpool City Region. The process that came before the report was influenced by the following:

On May 25th, 2020, during the Covid global Lockdown, millions of people witnessed the devastating murder of George Floyd, and it became the catalyst for many calls to action in multitudinous ways across the planet.

For myself, it was an all too familiar reminder of the deeply upsetting and reductive weight of witnessing racism yet again and realising that the perception of Black people as "less than" and/or "other" is not only still alive and well but it is still permitted to arrogantly present itself in the most audacious ways for all to see often without remorse or atonement.

While Mr Floyd's murder was the extreme end of racism, for myself and many other Black people who experience different degrees of prejudiced attitudes, limiting perceptions, glass ceilings and systemic exclusion based on the hues of our skin tones, it was yet another example of another day in the life of the Black experience.

Before the creation of this report, the Liverpool City Region Music Board (LCRMB) agreed that as a music sector, more needed to be done to address diversity and inclusion to reflect the contribution that Black people and Black music have made and continues to make. To demonstrate the Board's commitment to this, a Black Lives Matter Music Manifesto was written with an agreed set of strategies and actions which were as follows:

- The LCR Music Board increased the cultural mix of Board membership and subgroups with a commitment to a minimum of 30% Black members.

- May 2021 the Black Music Action Group (BMAG) was formed to drive action and accountability on Black inclusion and investment across the sector

- LCR Music Board supported the creation of this research to be carried out by University of Liverpool (led by Dr Mathew Flynn) which focused on the challenges and needs of Black creatives and industry professionals, as well as those specialising in Black music based in the Liverpool City Region.

- A mapping and skills audit of Black creatives and industry professionals across Liverpool City Region is currently being undertaken.

There is still a lot more work to be done. The findings from this report, while presenting clear perspectives on the current situation for Black creatives and industry professionals, are simply a stepping stone towards the much bigger picture of the creation of a Black music infrastructure.

After the mapping and skills audit has been completed the aim is to then look at how we, as a Black music sector, start to join the dots from the earliest stages of music education, through apprenticeships, Higher, Further and experiential education opportunities, showcasing, artistic development, mentoring, performances and behind the scenes activities in professional roles. I have called this process "Seed To Centre Stage". Ultimately, the aim is to have a Black music venue that is a creative and business hub housing all of the essential elements that create successful progression routes towards sustainability and legacy building. I firmly believe we will get there and so far, we are on track with the strategies and actions that were set out in the Music Manifesto in 2021.

I am not going to say it is an easy process, because it is not. There are so many challenges to navigate and difficult conversations to constantly be had, but if we don't achieve this whole process now, then when? I'm not alone in feeling like this but it's working together with the other people in the subgroup, having supportive creative and business allies who also wish to see this whole process succeed that make it easier to keep going towards the prize of equality, autonomy and amazing experiences among Black people who come from histories of exclusion. It is time for this to change.

On behalf of the Black Music Action Group, I would like to wholeheartedly thank Yaw Owusu for instigating this process and Dr Mathew Flynn (University of Liverpool / Institute of Popular Music) for creating and delivering this piece of historical research. Thank you so much. I would also like to thank LCR Music Board for supporting this process thus far and most importantly the participants who gave up their time in order to share their experiences around racism to make this report possible. The biggest thanks go out to the members of BMAG who met regularly in order to shape a more robust future for Black creatives and industry professionals working across Liverpool City Region now and in the future.

Love and respect,

Jennifer John
(BMAG Chair 2021 - 2023)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THIS REPORT IS THE CULMINATION OF TWO YEARS OF RESEARCH WHICH AIMED TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE EXPERIENCE OF BLACK MUSIC MAKERS/PRACTITIONERS WORKING IN THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION.

CONDUCTED BETWEEN 2021 AND 2023, THE RESEARCH ENGAGED FIFTY-SEVEN BLACK PEOPLE, IN INTERVIEWS, SURVEYS, AND FOCUS GROUPS. THE REPORT COMBINES THE RESULTS OF EACH PIECE OF RESEARCH TO OFFER A DETAILED OVERVIEW OF HOW BLACK PEOPLE CONTRIBUTE TO AND PARTICIPATE IN THE REGION'S MUSIC SECTOR, AND THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC CHALLENGES THEY ENCOUNTER IN DOING SO. AS IT IS THE FIRST TIME THIS TYPE OF RESEARCH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED IN THE CITY REGION, THE REPORT COVERS A BREADTH OF TOPICS THAT CONSIDER ISSUES OF ACCESSIBILITY, REPRESENTATION, EQUALITY, AND THE REGIONALLY SPECIFIC CONTEXTS THAT IMPACT THE MUSIC SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES AND CAREER PROGRESSION OF BLACK PEOPLE.

Following the publication of the Liverpool City Region Music Board's Black Lives in Music Manifesto and the formation of the Black Music Action Group in 2021, the purpose of this report is twofold:

1. Provide an evidence base for future policy and strategic decision-making on how to address structural racism and discrimination within the region's music sector.

2. Foster sector-wide discussion on how best to support Black musicians and industry practitioners to develop and sustain regionally-based music careers.

The report produces a total of 16 key findings and 22 recommendations for consideration, discussion, and implementation by a range of regional and national stakeholders. From this comprehensive list, the Black Music Action Group have selected the report's five main findings and recommendations that set out and frame the key priorities for change. What is clear from this report's findings is that as a sector we must adopt a coordinated approach, make the commitments, and find the resources to enact change. As outlined in the Foreword, this work has already begun, but it will require long-term focus, effort, and determination from everyone involved in the region's music sector to ensure that, by 2030, the Liverpool City Region has a more inclusive, diverse, and representative music sector.

MAIN FINDINGS

1. Broadly consistent with the UK wide data, racism and other forms of discrimination are common and consistent across the Liverpool City Region music sector.

2. There is a small but significant number of highly experienced Black music practitioners who have developed sustainable music industry careers living and working in Liverpool.

3. The opportunities for Black musicians to perform and develop as performers within the Liverpool City Region is currently highly dependent on the continued operation of a few critical venues and events.

4. A considerable amount of largely informal mentoring already takes place within the Liverpool City Region's Black music communities, but this places responsibilities upon mentors who do not necessarily have the time or training to fulfil the requirements of the role.

5. The research indicates that structural racism is most evident within Liverpool City Region music sector workplaces, across the live sector, and on social media.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Liverpool City Region Music Board (LCRMB) to produce a clear Liverpool City Region (LCR) Black music strategy that balances competing regional and national agendas toward an agreed set of prioritised aims and develops a suite of policies, strategies, and initiatives that businesses and organisations across the LCR music sector can adopt and apply in tackling direct and indirect racism.

2. LCRMB to work with relevant talent development programmes to target and secure higher-level funding specifically aimed at elevating the local and national profiles of LCR-based Black artists and industry professionals engaged in contemporary Black music scenes.

3. LCRMB to conduct a feasibility study on opening and operating a dedicated Black music hub space.

4. The LCRMB to allocate a portion of the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) Training and Development budget toward devising and delivering a professional network scheme for emerging LCR-Black music creators, creatives, and industry professionals. The scheme should include mentoring (and mentor training), professional coaching, peer support and mental health support. LCRMB to ensure the mentors on the proposed scheme must be trained, paid, and recruited based upon the strength of their industry knowledge and networks, not their location within or proximity to the region.

5. Supporting UK Music's Music Manifesto pledge to progress diversity and inclusion, LCRMB to work with the Liverpool City Region's Race Equality Hub, and build alliances and partnerships with national partners focused on DEI and Anti-Black Racism within the UK Music industry, such as Black Lives in Music, PRS Foundation's Power Up, and the Musicians' Union, to lobby for improved regulation of Anti-Black Racism in the UK Music Industry.

NATIONAL SECTOR SUPPORT FOR THE REMAP RESEARCH

The ReMap Report illuminates the pivotal role of Black music makers and practitioners in the Liverpool City Region, it presents a comprehensive analysis of their contributions, challenges, and the systemic barriers they face. It underscores the urgent need for a coordinated, inclusive approach to foster a more representative music industry.

This report not only highlights the importance of recognising and amplifying the voices and talents of Black artists and professionals across all UK regions, but also lays down a roadmap for actionable change towards equality, diversity, and empowerment within the entire music sector. It is a call to action for all stakeholders to commit to the creation of a more equitable music industry that truly reflects the diversity and richness of Black musical heritage.

Dr Charisse Beaumont,
Chief Executive, Black Lives in Music

Widely renowned for its role as a hub for music innovation and heritage, Liverpool has undeniably played an important role in shaping the UK's cultural landscape and propelling our music onto the global stage. Nonetheless, the findings from this report underscore the need for continued efforts to support and spotlight the full breadth of talent that has contributed to its thriving economy.

Through our diversity campaigns and collaborating closely with the music industry across the UK, we have gleaned at UK Music that forging strategic partnerships is pivotal in addressing issues of diversity. Therefore, while it is crucial to acknowledge the report's findings, the collaborative efforts of music stakeholders throughout Liverpool signals progress towards establishing a more inclusive environment and expanded opportunities for Black Music Creators and Practitioners.

Anticipating the impact of Liverpool's commitment to the Black Music community, I eagerly await the inspiration it may instil in other cities and music communities across the UK.

Liverpool City Region Black Music Action Group and Liverpool City Region Music Board, thank you for being bold and fostering a collective drive for positive change and inclusivity.

Eunice Obianagha
Head of Diversity, UK Music

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INTRODUCTION

As a UNESCO City of Music, Liverpool is renowned for its rich musical heritage[1]. While often advantageous for culture, the economy and tourism, there are potential downsides to Liverpool's music history for its present-day musicians.

In 2011, Yaw Owusu, through his organisation URBEATZ[2], delivered the Liverpool One project[3] which explored how aspiring Black music makers engaged with their home city. Research conducted as part of the project by Brett Lashua concluded Black music makers, although working in unrelated genres, 'must bear the impress of the city's canonical popular music narratives – i.e., the dominant heritage of the Beatles and subsequent guitar-based rock bands' (Lashua and Owusu, 2013, p.203)[4].

Following the global Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, music organisations across the UK recommitted to challenging prejudice and systemic racism. Once again curated and coordinated by Yaw Owusu, the Liverpool City Region Music Board's (LCRMB)[5] and Culture Liverpool's initial response was to deliver the ON RECORD[6] project as part of Black History Month 2020. Aimed at restarting discussions about the importance of Black music and culture in and to Liverpool, the multimedia programme engaged often unheralded Black music and media creators, and produced a number of emotive and impactful pieces of media that explore many untold stories by many unheard voices. In the Listen Up video[7] for ON RECORD, active members of Liverpool's Black music community discuss the limitations of making and marketing Black music within Liverpool. Although delivered almost ten years apart, the striking similarities of the observations between the 2011 research and 2020 video illustrated the inertia within the Liverpool City Region's (LCR) music industry to enable and support Black musicians.

This realisation prompted the LCRMB to question:

- Why does Liverpool's Black music community remain underrepresented in the LCR's wider music economy?

- What can be done to increase parity between Liverpool-based emerging and established Black music artists and their equivalents from other demographics?

- How can the LCR's music industry infrastructure be developed to support aspiring Black musicians?

Following the publication of LCRMB's Black Music Manifesto in 2021, the LCRMB formed a Black Music Action Group (BMAG)[8] to begin to address a foundational observation in the manifesto:

> **"IF LIVERPOOL IS TO BE AN AUTHENTIC CITY OF MUSIC THEN IT NEEDS TO REFLECT THE MULTI-CULTURALISM AND MORE SPECIFICALLY THE CONTRIBUTION THAT BLACK PEOPLE AND BLACK MUSIC HAS MADE AND CONTINUES TO MAKE, AND THE CORRESPONDING WEALTH OF MUSIC, CULTURE AND BUSINESS THAT RESULTS FROM THIS. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS IS ALSO CORE TO BEING A UNESCO CITY OF MUSIC IN THE 21ST CENTURY."[9]**

The three questions prompted BMAG to commission research that resulted in three related pieces of work under the banner of ReMap[10]. A collaboration between Yaw Owusu's Nothin But The Music, ON RECORD, the LCRMB, and the Institute of Popular Music (IPM) at the University of Liverpool (UoL), the ReMap research project explored the creative and career development challenges experienced by Black musicians and industry practitioners living and working in the LCR.

ReMap's first phase produced a short documentary film[11] that explored the creative and career experience of eight Black artists from Liverpool who had previously been part of the 2011 Liverpool One project, which a decade earlier had identified them as having industry potential. The documentary shows that despite the optimism that the Liverpool One project, and subsequent initiatives, would change the social, cultural, and industrial landscape for Black musicians from the region, Black music makers and industry professionals continue to encounter many of the same challenges in pursuing careers in music as they did ten years ago. The interviews also confirmed a perception that Liverpool's Black music infrastructure compares poorly to London, Birmingham, and Manchester, with a lack of opportunity or a clear path to a regionally sustainable career cited as key issues.

Drawing upon themes emerging from the documentary, the second ReMap phase was to conduct the first ever specific survey of Liverpool's Black music community. The extensive online survey was active between November 2021 and March 2022 and had 37 respondents. Comparatively, the most recent general survey of LCR music makers conducted in 2020, Playing In[12], listed 175 respondents, with 3% (n=6) of participants identifying as Black. More recently, Black Lives in Music's 2021 national survey 'Being Black in the Music Industry'[13] generated 89 respondents from the entire North West of England, 5% of the total 1718 national responses. Therefore, the results of the ReMap Black Music Survey offer the most comprehensive set of Black musicians and practitioners views on the LCR's music industry to date.

The final phase of the research delivered three focus groups in late 2022 and early 2023 that invited 12 young Black musicians to discuss their current experience and establish what still needs to change to increase visibility and parity for Liverpool's Black musicians in this decade. Each facilitated semi-structured focus group ran for approximately 90 minutes and opened the discussion with the same question: What does the Liverpool music industry mean to you? Participant responses were recorded, transcribed, and anonymised, and then coded into core themes that aligned with the preceding interview and survey data.

This report combines and summarises 57 participant opinions expressed in the extended versions of the interviews featured in the ReMap documentary, the quantitative and qualitative results and comments from the survey, and the coded themes that emerged during the focus group discussions.

Following introductory headline demographic and economic data, that offers an indication as to the wider artistic and employment activities of Black music makers and practitioners across the region, the report is thematically structured. Each themed section produces key observations and recommendations for action on the issues that emerged through adopting a grounded theory approach[14] to analysing the views expressed by participants across all three phases of the research. At selected points, where questions asked in the ReMap Black Music Survey were designed to replicate questions in preceding surveys, the report uses data from the Playing In and BLIM research as regional and national comparators[15]. The key observations and recommendations accumulate to offer an overview of the work that needs to be undertaken in the short, medium, and long-term. The conclusion addresses the three LCRMB questions (see above), with the aim to ensure that in 2030 Liverpool's regional music industry is not asking the same questions again.

DEFINITIONS & ABBREVIATIONS

BLACK

Participants engaged across the research identified their ethnic group as Black, African, Black British, White and Black African, White and Black Caribbean, Asian and Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups.

BLACK MUSIC ACTION GROUP

A sub-group of Liverpool City Region Music Board, established to redress imbalance and proactively create a sustainable and dynamic sector that supports Black artists across all music genres, and increases engagement in music across all of the Liverpool City Region's multi-cultural communities.

BLACK LIVES IN MUSIC

Organisation that addresses the current inequality of opportunity for Black, Asian and Ethnically Diverse people aspiring to be artists or professionals in the Jazz and Classical music industry.

DIRECT RACE DISCRIMINATION

To treat someone less favourably than someone else would be treated in the same circumstances, because of race.

EXPERIENCED

Happened to you.

HELP MUSICIANS

A charity for professional musicians of all genres, both in work and in retirement.

INDIRECT RACE DISCRIMINATION

To have a rule, policy, or practice which people of a particular racial, ethnic, or national group are less likely to be able to meet than other people, and this places them at a disadvantage.[16]

INDUSTRY PRACTITIONER

Collective term for those engaged in non-musical roles within the music industries, e.g., managers, PRs, consultants, tutors, mentors, agents, A&R, etc.

MICROAGGRESSION

A comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority).[17]

MUSIC MAKER

The collective term for all those involved in the music making process, e.g., artists, producers, songwriters, session musicians, composers, etc.

MUSICIANS' UNION

Stands up for employed and self-employed musicians working in every area of the UK music industry, including music education.

POWER UP

Supports Black music creators and industry professionals and executives, as well as addressing Anti-Black racism and racial disparities in the music sector.

PRS FOUNDATION

Invest in the future of music by supporting talent development and new music across the UK.

WITNESSED

Observed/aware of it happening to someone else.

UK MUSIC

The collective voice of the UK's music industry.

BMAG	Liverpool City Region Music Board Black Music Action Group
BLIM	Black Lives in Music
BMM	Black Music Maker
BMP	Black Music Practitioner
BMS	Black Music (ReMap) Survey
LCC	Liverpool City Council
LCR	Liverpool City Region
LCRMB	Liverpool City Region Music Board
PI	Playing In Survey

THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

There were 37 respondents to the Black Music Survey (BMS), 20 Music Makers (54%) and 17 Music Practitioners (46%), a split not dissimilar to the 60% to 40% in favour of music makers in the BLIM survey[18]. **Figures 1 and 2** show the age distribution and gender identity of the ReMap Survey participants. Both charts include data from the Playing In (PI) survey of all LCR music makers as a comparator.

FIGURE 1
GRAPH OF PARTICIPANTS BY AGE
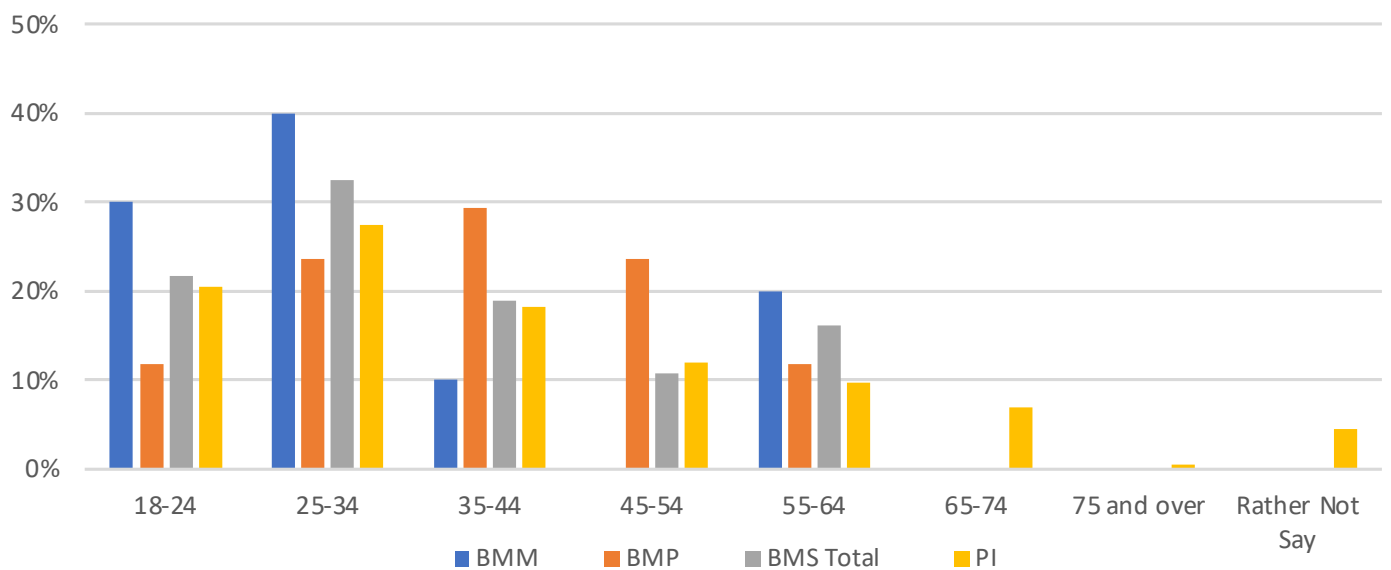
Although there is a relatively even age distribution of participants in the sector wide Playing In Survey, 70% of Black Music Maker participants in the BMS are 18-34, whereas Black Music Practitioners ages cluster between the 25-54 brackets.

FIGURE 2
GRAPH OF PARTICIPANTS BY SEX
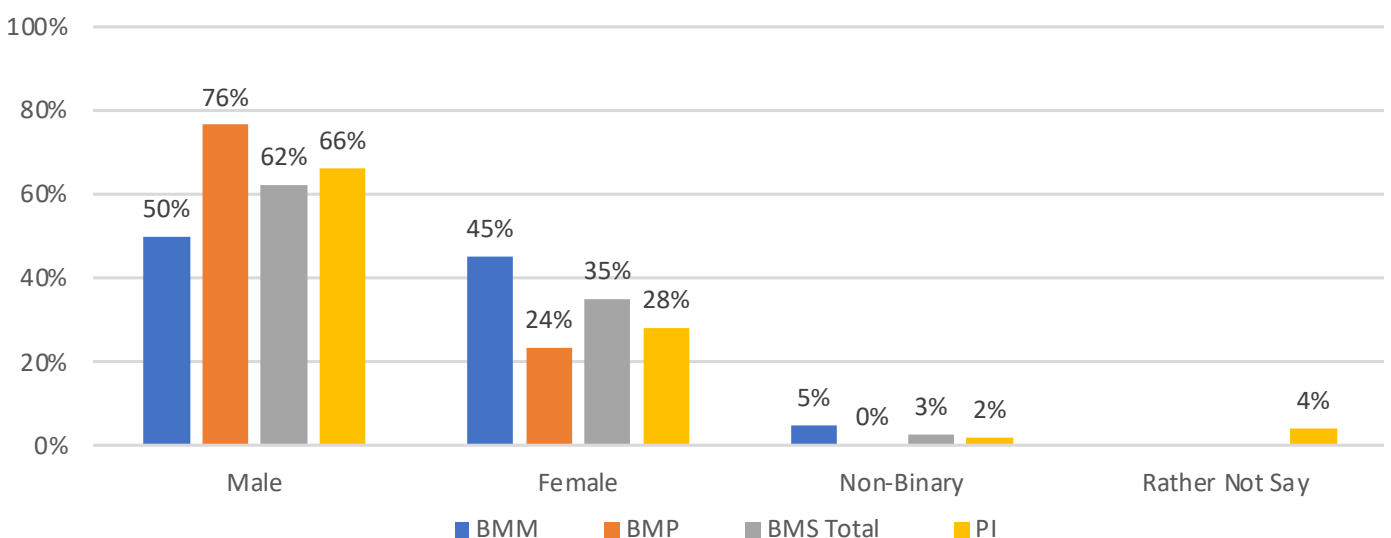
There is a more even male and female split for BMMs and a higher representation of non-binary participants in comparison to the wider musician sector (PI), which has two-thirds male representation. However, on the BMP side of the ReMap survey three-quarters are males, reflecting wider industry iss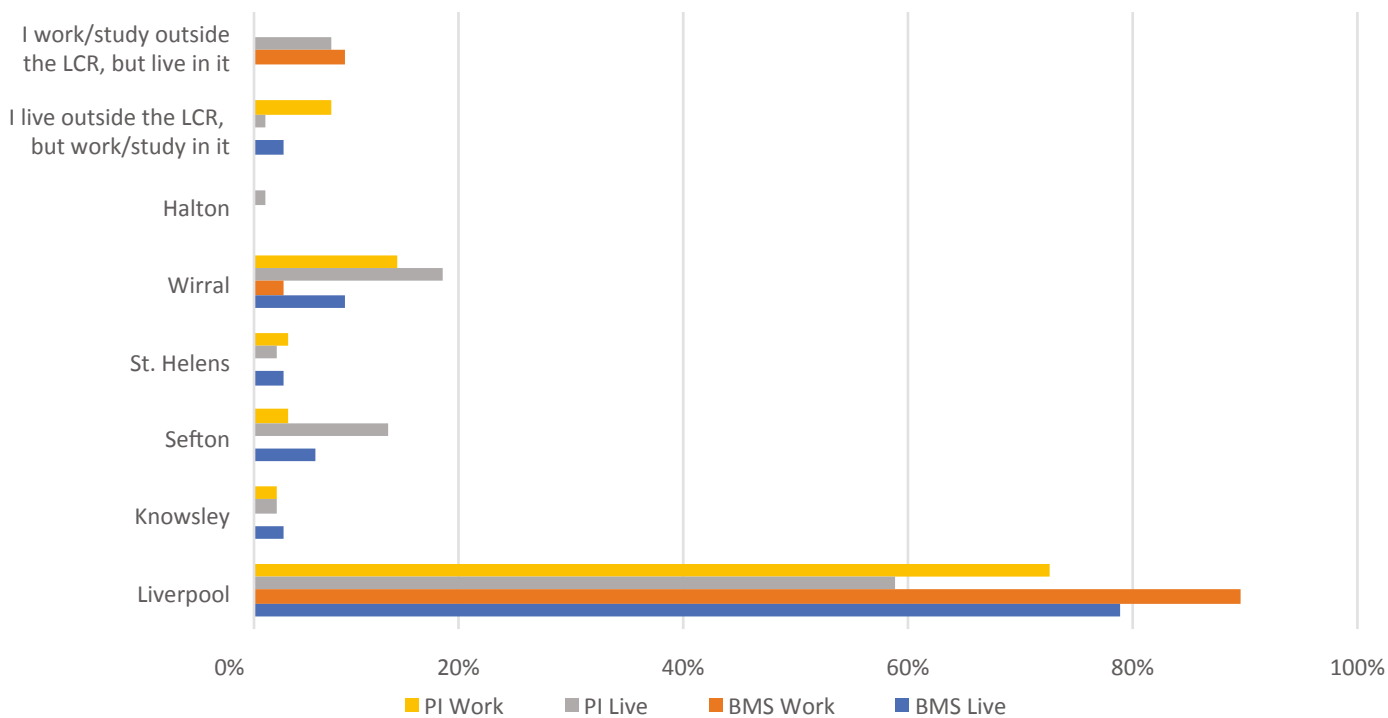ues around the underrepresentation of women in industry roles, and, when aligned with the age data, the specific challenges females encounter in developing, building, and sustaining long-term careers[19].

FIGURE 3
GRAPH OF PARTICIPANTS BY LOCAL AUTHORITY LOCATION FOR HOME AND WORK

Figure 3 suggests almost all Black music makers and practitioners live and work in Liverpool. The underrepresentation of Black people in music related activities across the LCR's other five local authorities came up in several of the focus group discussions, and was generally viewed as exacerbating the challenges identified in the report that focuses on experiences of those living and working in Liverpool.

SURVEY PARTICIPANT EARNINGS

Table 1 lists the declared annual earnings for BMP's and BMM's with the PI data used as a comparator. Over half of the Black Music Professional survey respondents earn between £20k and £45k per year, with 77% of them having at least 8-10 years industry experience. The remainder earn less than 10k per annum, with 60% having less than 7 years industry experience. This suggests Black Music Practitioners within the LCR can progress to earnings above the national living wage if they build their career to gain sufficient experience. However, for those that do, only a third will earn the median national wage of £33,280[20] or above. The ReMap survey response, although only a small sample size, suggests it is difficult for Black Music Practitioners to break the £45k per annum barrier while living and working in Liverpool. This challenge is amplified for Black female practitioners, who are more likely to encounter extended career breaks[21].

TABLE 1

PARTICIPANTS SELF-DECLARED ESTIMATED INCOME FOR A TYPICAL YEAR IF UNAFFECTED BY THE PANDEMIC

	BMP	PI	BMM
£100,000 Plus	0%	0.5%	0%
£75,000 to £100,000	0%	0.5%	5%
£50,000 to £75,000	0%	2%	0%
£45,000 to £50,000	0%	1%	0%
£40,000 to £45,000	12%	1%	0%
£35,000 to £40,000	12%	2%	0%
£30,000 to £35,000	12%	3%	5%
£25,000 to £30,000	12%	5%	0%
£20,000 to £25,000	6%	5%	10%
£15,000 to £20,000	0%	3%	0%
£10,000 to £15,000	0%	5%	5%
5,000 to £10,000	23%	10%	20%
Less than £5,000	12%	18%	15%
Less than £1,000	6%	23%	25%
No Income	5%	14%	5%
Rather Not Say	0%	7%	10%

70% of Black Music Makers from the region earn less than the living wage of £17,290 per annum[22] from their music-making activities, and this is completely in line with the general LCR musician population and musicians nationally[23]. Likewise, as with all LCR music makers, only 10% of BMMs break the national living wage benchmark. Although national data demonstrates musicians from Global Majority backgrounds earn on average almost £1000 less per year than White musicians[24], the LCR data suggest ethnicity is not a key factor in determining the incomes of Black LCR music makers. Yet, like all music makers across the region, the circumstances in which BMMs must forge careers are precarious and generally challenging regionally, nationally, and internationally[25]. Consistent with wider national data[26], most Black music makers rely on other sources of income outside of music to sustain themselves. The lack of mid-career artists in the BMS data is consistent with national research[27], and resonates with observations made during the qualitative research phases.

> "I'VE SEEN REPETITION OF A LACK OF ACCESS, AND AVAILABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLACK PEOPLE TO PROGRESS PAST A CERTAIN STAGE. THAT TO ME HASN'T CHANGED IN TERMS OF BLACK PEOPLE HAVING BEEN INCLUDED IN INFRASTRUCTURES, THAT MEANS THAT THEY CAN BE SUPPORTED THROUGH PROCESSES. TO ME, THAT STILL DOESN'T EXIST, ENOUGH FOR BLACK PEOPLE TO HAVE SUSTAINABLE CAREERS WITHIN THE REGION, WITHIN MUSIC."

Key Finding: There is a small but significant number of highly experienced Black music practitioners who have developed sustainable music industry careers living and working in Liverpool.

Recommendation: Through a mapping exercise, LCRMB to identify current LCR Black music professionals and develop exemplar case studies around their career journeys and identify points of synergy in their professional development.

Recommendation: LCRMB to produce career profiles of the LCR's Black music professionals and feature them on the blog on the LCRMB webpage, and promote on social media.

Recommendation: LCRMB to work with relevant talent development programmes to target and secure higher-level funding specifically aimed at elevating the local and national profiles of LCR-based Black artists and industry professionals engaged in contemporary Black music scenes.

Key Finding: The region's Black music makers are predominantly 35 or under with 70% earning £15k or less a year from their music activities.

Recommendation: LCRMB to support further research as to why the survey data suggests there are hardly any 35-55-year-old Black music makers active within the region, and, if accurate, explore what impact this has on the Black music ecosystem.
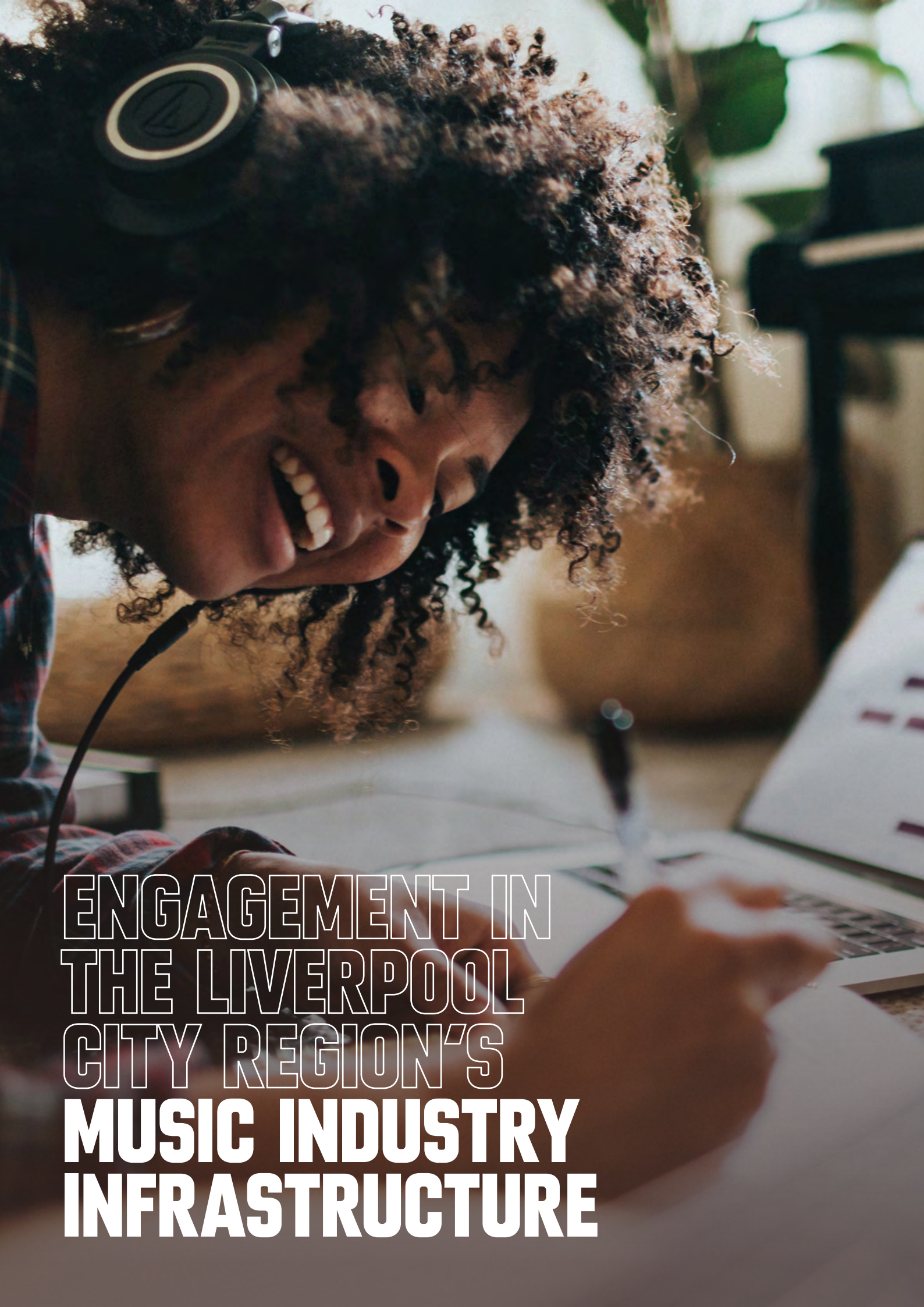
ENGAGEMENT IN THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION'S MUSIC INDUSTRY INFRASTRUCTURE

This section combines data from all three aspects of the research to consider participants engagement with and experience of the LCR's music industry.

> **"THERE'S ONLY ROOM FOR ONE! SO, EVERYONE'S FIGHTING FOR THE SAME OPPORTUNITY. AND THEN THERE COMES A LITTLE BIT OF HATE, WHERE IT'S LIKE, WELL, WHY HAS HE GOT THAT SHOW? WHY HAVEN'T I GOT THAT SHOW?"**

> **"IT'S LIKE A BIT OF A RAT RACE BETWEEN US IN THIS ROOM TO TRY AND GET THAT SPOT AND THEN MAYBE THE MENTALITY IS WHEN I'M THERE, THEN I'LL SHARE MY MAN'S THING."**

The above participant quotes allude to the perceived limitation on opportunities for Black music makers in LCR's music industry. What is concerning is that the first quote references back to the LCR scene in 2011, while the second quote was made about the scene of November 2022. The implication in these observations is there has been little change in the LCR's industry infrastructure in the past decade to expand the opportunities available to BMMs from the region, meaning performance and career opportunities remain limited.

BLACK MUSIC MAKER/ PRACTITIONER ROLES

Demonstrating a comprehensive and varied range of music industry activities across the LCR, survey participants identified 36 distinct music maker/practitioner job roles (see **Appendix 1**), with each participant engaging in an average 4.6 distinct roles. Over half of all music makers identified as a songwriter (75%) and/or solo artist (60%). The main roles occupied by practitioners were as managers (30%) and consultants (41%), with both groups engaging significantly as media/content creators (35%) and as entrepreneurs/founders (24%). Broadly recognised as a portfolio career, which is typical across the music industries[28], this data is consistent with national data on musicians' roles[29].

LCR INDUSTRY SECTORS

In terms of the infrastructure to support the range of roles and activities, when reflecting on entering Liverpool's music industry as a writer/solo artist for the first time during the 2011 Liverpool One project, an interview participant recalled:

> **"I YEARNED FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, AND A NETWORK TO FALL INTO WHEN I WAS GETTING INTO MUSIC."**

An observation by a focus group writer/artist participant about the LCR music sector in 2022 suggests there remains a perception of a lack of substantive change for Black musicians and practitioners in the past decade:

> **"THERE'S NO INFRASTRUCTURE HERE. SO, YOU HAVE TO GO OUT [OF THE CITY] TO GET IT."**

This perception is underpinned by an artist survey participant detailing their professional practice:

> **"MY ACCOUNTANTS ARE IN MANCHESTER. MY LAWYERS ARE IN LONDON AND NYC. MY PR IS IN LONDON AND MANCHESTER. MY PUBLISHER IS IN LONDON. I MANAGE MYSELF. MY DISTRIBUTOR IS IN LONDON, I HAVE MY OWN LABEL. I MAINLY BOOK MY OWN SHOWS BUT I HAVE A BOOKING AGENT IN EUROPE."**

As **Figure 4** demonstrates, one possible reason Black music makers perceive there is limited industry infrastructure to support career development is that, proportionally, there is very little Black music practitioner LCR engagement in the live, publishing and recording sectors:

FIGURE 4
PARTICIPANTS DIRECT INVOLVEMENT WITH DIFFERENT INDUSTRY SECTORS ACROSS THE LCR
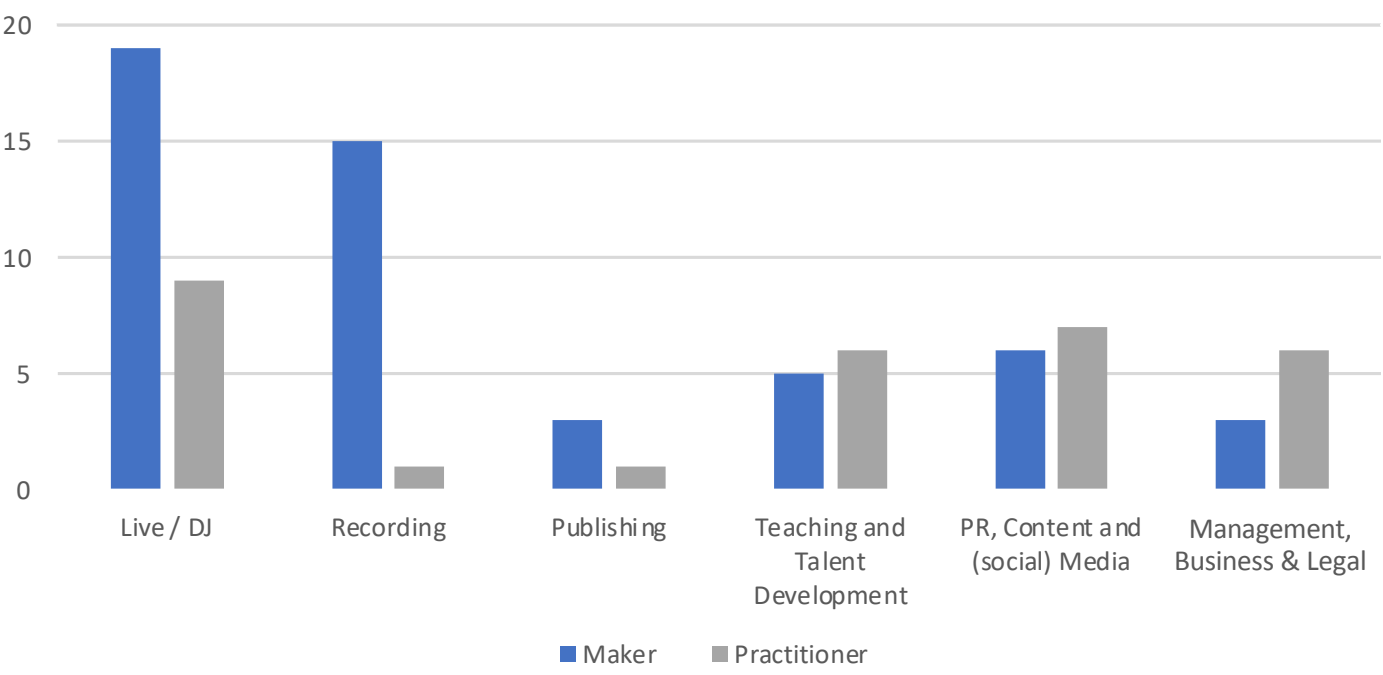
Essentially, the survey data suggests that LRC Black industry professionals are not very present in the industry sectors predominantly occupied by Black music makers. As this interview participant describes:

> **"IF YOU'RE WHITE INDIE ARTISTS IN LIVERPOOL, THERE'S GONNA BE AN HISTORICAL BASE OF MANAGERS ETC. IN THE CITY WHO KNOW THE PATH AND CAN CARVE THAT OUT FOR YOU AND KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO TO GET YOU FROM, WHERE YOU ARE, TO WHERE YOU NEED TO BE. AS A BLACK MUSIC CREATOR, YOU WALK ON YOUR OWN TO FIGURE OUT HOW YOU GET TO WHERE YOU NEED TO BE, THERE'S NO SET PATH."**

There was clearly a perception amongst interview and focus group participants of a lack of industry network for Black music makers to connect with to develop their careers.

Figure 5 details the results of a survey question that asked each participant to state the number of contacts in their active industry networks in each role, and the number of contacts who are Black. As expected, across most industry positions, practitioners are better networked than music makers. While practitioner survey respondents may not be directly active in the record, publishing and live sectors, there are regional connections to each sector through the wider practitioner and music maker networks. However, it is also clear that, in the participant's networks, there are very few Black people working in roles within the publishing, recording, live, and legal sectors.

Conversely, there are significant numbers of Black people occupying roles in traditional and online media (influencers), mentoring and, to a lesser extent, artist management. In general, the number of Black people in active industry roles in participants networks was between 10% and 20%. At around five times higher than the 3.5% of people that identify as Black in Liverpool's overall population[30], this data supports this survey participants observation:

> **"THERE IS A SUPPORT NETWORK BETWEEN BLACK PEOPLE WORKING WITHIN THE CITY THAT'S CONTINUING TO GET STRONGER AND STRONGER. SO, I DO SEE THAT CHANGE HAS HAPPENED. AND I DO HAVE FAITH THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO."**

FIGURE 5

THE TOTAL AVERAGE NUMBER OF CONTACTS IN EVERY SURVEY RESPONDENT'S PROFESSIONAL NETWORK AND THE PERCENTAGE OF THOSE PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE BLACK
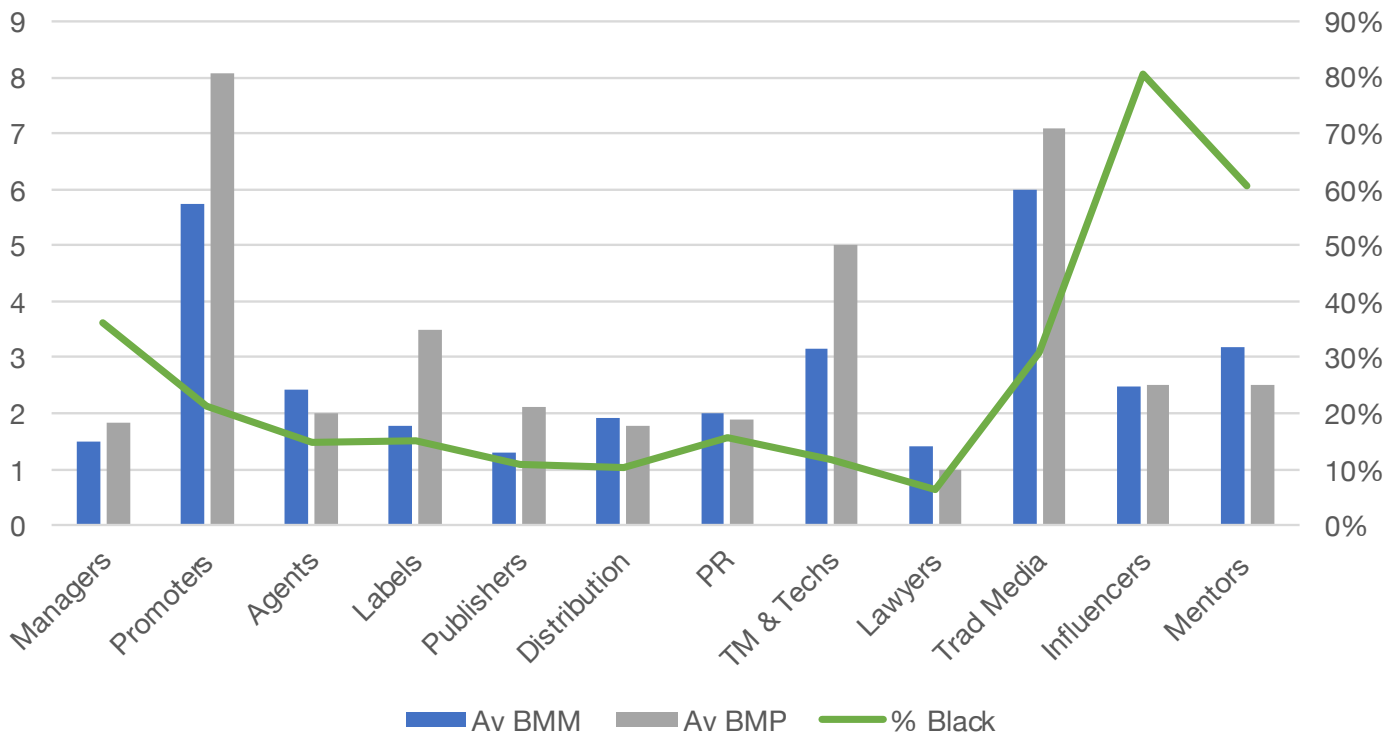
The data in **Figure 5** demonstrates that, particularly for older and more experienced Black music practitioners, there are established networks of Black music industry professionals who collaborate. However, a common theme across the focus groups with mainly younger, less experienced music makers was a lack of visibility of existing networks of Black professionals. As one focus group participant concluded about the focus group discussion:

> **"YEAH, I JUST THINK THAT IN ORDER TO BRIDGE THESE DIVIDES, FOR ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WE REALLY NEED IS MORE NETWORKING EVENTS, LIKE THIS, LIKE THINGS WHERE WE CAN TALK AND WE CAN SHARE IDEAS AND SHARE WHAT THE PROBLEMS ARE AND SHARE HOW WE CAN MAYBE COME UP WITH SOME SOLUTIONS AND STUFF LIKE THAT."**

The emerging theme from the analysis of regional industry infrastructures is that the industry sectors where emerging Black music makers are pursuing their creative and career ambitions are not the same sectors where the region's Black practitioners predominantly operate and have strong networks with other Black professionals (in PR, media, management, consultancy, and talent development). In particular, comparatively less Black professionals work in the regional recording and publishing sectors.

Key Finding: The LCR music industry infrastructures that support project and career development are fragmented and difficult to identify and access for Black musicians.

Key Finding: There is insufficient Black practitioner representation within the core music industry sectors of live, recording and publishing.

Recommendation: Through a mapping exercise, LCRMB to identify all Black owned and operated music related businesses and organisations across the LCR to establish and capitalise upon areas of sectoral strength and identify areas that require infrastructural development.

Recommendation: LCRMB to organise and facilitate proactive networking and showcase events to foster conversation and collaboration, and bring together individuals and organisations from across the region, including those with experience in records and publishing that cater to contemporary genres.

Recommendation: LCRMB to work with regional live, record and publishing businesses to encourage the training and development of Black practitioners within these sectors. This may include the signposting to effective and approved training programmes and facilitators.

PERCEPTION
AND EXPERIENCE
OF RACISM

There are clearly infrastructural challenges to address in enabling and facilitating the Liverpool City Region's Black music community to be more visible and connected to each other across the various industry sectors, roles, and demographics.

The survey also asked participants about their experiences of discrimination as they worked and pursued their careers, and participant responses demonstrate the scale of the challenges regional and national music industries organisations need to be proactive in addressing.

To provide nationally comparative data the BMS replicated a question asked in the Black Lives in Music survey: Have you faced discrimination in the industry and on which basis?

FIGURE 6
SURVEY RESPONDENT EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION
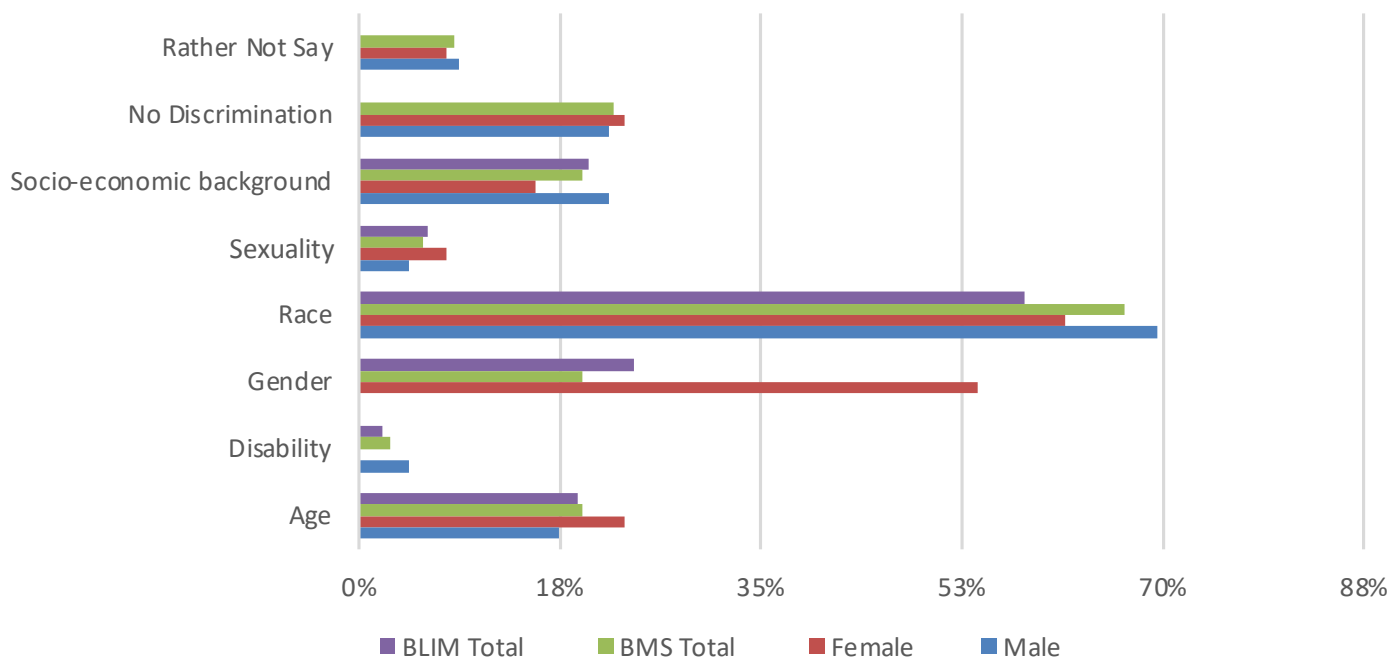
The graph lists six types of discrimination and shows both the combined total and the contrasting experiences of male and female BMS survey participants. The graph also includes national BLIM total data for broad comparison. Of all survey respondents 8% chose not to complete this section and 22% stated they experienced no form of discrimination. Data for the remaining participants demonstrates very little difference across all six categories between the regional experience of discrimination (BMS total) as compared to the national data (BLIM Total).

A higher percentage of Black women have experienced discrimination related to age and sexuality compared to both LCR Black men and the national data. Only women have experienced discrimination due to their gender, accounting for the entire regional total, which is almost comparable to the national figure. If the LCR data is replicated nationally[31], gender discrimination of Black women in the music industries is likely far more prevalent across the UK than the BLIM data suggests. Conversely, Black LCR men experience discrimination predominately around socioeconomic background and race, with 70% of male BMS respondents having faced racial discrimination as compared to 62% of women. When combined, the data for both sexes shows an overall total of 67%, a figure 9% higher across the LCR when compared to a national figure of 58%. The regional BMS survey, replicating the questions of the national BLIM survey, collected similar responses to the latter (listed in **Appendix 2**), further demonstrating that LCR experiences of race discrimination are largely consistent with the national statistics.

To further explore the types of racism experienced by ReMap participants, the survey again replicated questions originally asked in the BLIM national survey[32] but adapted the broader BLIM methodology by applying the questions to twelve specific industry sectors/scenarios. The BLIM report detailed that nationally:

67% OF RESPONDENTS HAD WITNESSED DIRECT/INDIRECT RACISM

63% OF RESPONDENTS HAD EXPERIENCED DIRECT/INDIRECT RACISM

The different methods employed for generating the data means the BLIM and BMS sets are not directly comparable. However, considering that 65% of Black music creators witness/experience racism in some context nationally (BLIM), **Table 2** shows the number of BMS participants who have witnessed/experienced racism in specific sectors of the regional industry.

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO HAVE WITNESSED/EXPERIENCED RACISM IN DIFFERENT MUSIC INDUSTRY SCENARIOS

	Industry Scenarios	Witnessed Direct/Indirect Racism	Experienced Direct/Indirect Racism
1.	At a Music Industry Related Workplace	77%	63%
2.	In Professional Meetings	45%	54%
3.	At Gigs and Venues	74%	63%
4.	In Production Spaces	17%	17%
5.	When on Social Media	84%	44%
6.	Attending Training & Education	65%	55%
7.	While Touring / Travelling	70%	60%
8.	While Socialising in Relation to Work	57%	23%
9.	At Conferences / Events	53%	26%
10.	When Working with LCR Professionals	39%	25%
11.	When Working with LCR Musicians	45%	25%
12.	When Working with LCR Media	52%	22%
	Overall Average	**56%**	**40%**

The national Help Musicians Census figures show 45% of Global Majority UK musicians have experienced racism, whereas 36% have witnessed racism[33]. Overall, the ReMap data reveals that racism is witnessed and experienced in every LCR industry context but that, in contrast to the national data, witnessing racism (56%) is more prevalent than personal experiences of racism (40%). In eight of the twelve ReMap scenarios more than 50% of participants had witnessed racism, whereas that number reduces to five scenarios for participants experiencing racism. It is only when meeting professionally that racism is experienced more than it is witnessed. On social media, racism was witnessed by almost all participants but experienced by less than half of them. This differential is reflective of the broader issues with social media use and abuse, and the witnessing of widely acknowledged negative practices of trolling, cancelling and racial and sexist comments often directed at particular individuals who are prominent on social media[34]. Underlining the toxic aspects of socials, **Figure 7** details the frequency of participants experiences of racism across the different scenarios: social media stands out as the only space where racism occurs often and regularly in more than 50% of participants' experiences.

FREQUENCY OF EXPERIENCES OF RACISM IN DIFFERENT LCR MUSIC SCENARIOS
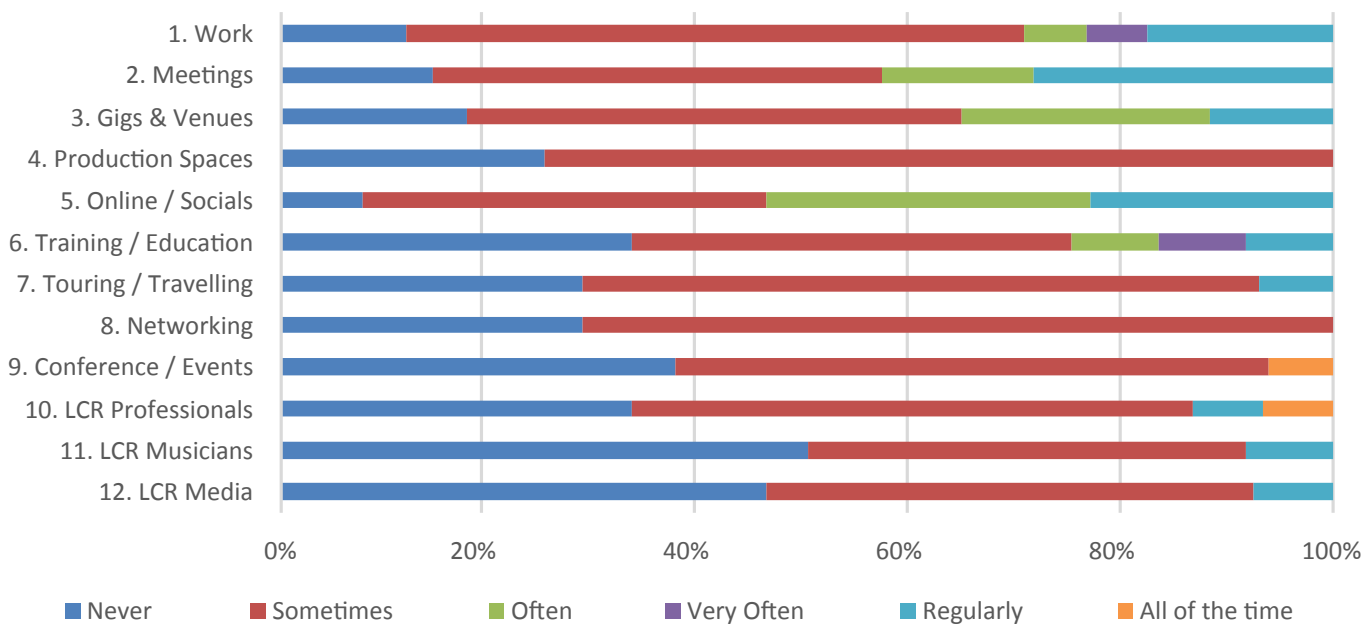
In scenarios 8 through to 12, that are more predicated upon self-selecting and directed interpersonal interactions, comparatively racism is experienced far less and far less frequently (see **Figure 7**) than in the generally more societal scenarios 1 to 7. Although engagements with LCR Professionals (14%) and Conferences/Events (6%) are the only scenarios where a small percentage of participants experience racism 'regularly' or 'all of the time', these findings suggest racism is witnessed and experienced far less in scenarios where participants have greater autonomy to choose the situation and people they interact with. This seems most in evidence in the very low number of participants that 'sometimes' witness/experience racism in production spaces, where generally small groups of artists, musicians, and producers etc., choose who they creatively collaborate with, and control the environments in which they work.

The percentage of participants witnessing/experiencing racism exceeds the 65% BLIM national figure in LCR workplaces (scenario 1 in **Table 2**) and the regional live events sector (scenarios 3 & 7 in **Table 2**). As detailed in **Figure 7**, participants also report higher regular instances of racism at gigs and venues and at work, that, when combined with high experience figures (**Fig. 7**), implies racism is systemic and structural within these scenarios. A key theme across the interview and focus group discussions was a lack of representation and input into decision-making in workplaces and organisations operating across the live sector. This was viewed as a fundamental barrier to challenging and changing structural racism within these scenarios. The sentiment is typified by this participant comment:

> **"YOU WANT TO LOOK AT THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR STAFF. SO, THE PEOPLE WHO ARE MAKING DECISIONS ON THE ARTISTS BEING PROGRAMMED, THE AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT, THOSE PEOPLE NEED TO BE PEOPLE LIKE US. AND IT'S JUST THAT SIMPLE. AND IF YOU WANT PEOPLE LIKE ME TO COME INTO YOUR THEATRE TO WATCH THE SHOW, PEOPLE LIKE ME NEED TO BE CREATIVE IN THE PROGRAM. AND ALSO, THOSE SPACES NEED TO BE SAFE FOR BLACK ARTISTS".**

The data on experiences of Training and Education (scenario 6) concerningly also suggest systemic issues that make engagement challenging and uncomfortable:

> **"YOU THINK YOU CAN WALK INTO THIS ROOM AND YOU'RE GOING TO BE THE ONLY PERSON THERE LIKE YOU. AND IT'S SCARY. IT'S DAUNTING."**

Consistent with national research on a lack of access to senior leadership roles [35], these various experiences of discrimination and exclusion manifest in expressions of doubt, questions of deservedness, and frustration:

> **"HAVING SPENT MY ENTIRE LIFE WITH SOME DEGREE OF RACISM, I'VE REFUSED TO ALLOW IT TO STOP ME PROGRESSING. HAVING SAID THAT, I DO WONDER IF I MIGHT HAVE HAD A FEW MORE OPPORTUNITIES ALONG THE WAY IF I WAS WHITE?? I'M NOT SURE IF I'LL EVER KNOW FOR SURE."**

> **"YOU ALWAYS GET THOSE PEOPLE OBSERVING YOU ALL THE TIME AND THINKING THAT PERSON DOESN'T DESERVE IT."**

> **"I DON'T ALWAYS TRUST MYSELF TO TURN AROUND TO MY GIRLFRIEND AND SAY, YOU KNOW WHAT? I'M GOING TO SPEND THIS MONEY ON MYSELF. WATCH YOU'LL THANK ME LATER. I DON'T TRUST MYSELF TO DO THAT."**

> **"CHANGE WON'T HAPPEN UNTIL AT LEADERSHIP LEVEL, BLACK VOICES CAN BE HEARD, BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE YOU CAN MAKE REAL DIFFERENCE."**

Broad comparisons with the BLIM data show the percentage of people who witness and experience racism within the LCR music industry is consistent with the national data. As with the rest of the country, while these findings confirm there is a great deal of work to do to tackle racism across the regional music industries, the more nuanced scenario approach adopted during the ReMap research identifies the workplace, social media, and the live sector as particular areas of concern within the LCR.

Key Finding: Broadly consistent with the UK wide data, racism and other forms of discrimination are common and consistent across the Liverpool City Region music sector.

Recommendation: Building upon the Black Music Manifesto, the Liverpool City Region Music Board (LCRMB) to produce a clear Liverpool City Region (LCR) Black music strategy that balances competing regional and national agendas toward an agreed set of prioritised aims and develops a suite of policies, strategies, and initiatives that businesses and organisations across the LCR music sector can adopt and apply in tackling direct and indirect racism.

Key Finding: The research indicates structural racism is most evident within Liverpool City Region music sector workplaces, across the live sector, and on social media.

Recommendation: LCRMB to support more detailed research on music industry workplaces and the live sector as to the prominence and prevalence of racism within these areas, and produce sector specific guidance for adoption by workers, businesses, and organisations to address the root causes of the issues.

Recommendation: Supporting UK Music's Music Manifesto pledge[36] to progress diversity and inclusion, LCRMB to work with the Liverpool City Region's Race Equality Hub, and build alliances and partnerships with national partners focused on DEI and Anti-Black Racism within the UK Music industry, such as BLIM, PRS Foundation's Power Up, and the Musicians' Union, to lobby for improved regulation of Anti-Black Racism in the UK Music Industry.

Key Finding: There is a perceived lack of Black representation at senior management levels across LCR's music organisations.

Recommendation: LCRMB to conduct research on LCR music sector workforce demographics to establish baseline employment data on the region's music sector.

REPRESENTATION, ACCESSIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITY ACROSS THE LCR'S MUSIC INDUSTRY

The previous section established that direct and indirect racism remains a persistent barrier to access, engagement and inclusion for Black music makers and practitioners across the LCR. As well as overcoming these challenges, there are other dominant structures and narratives, such as Liverpool's almost automatic association to The Beatles outlined in the introduction, that affect the artistic and professional opportunities of BMMs and BMPs. This section considers the other dominant themes that emerged across the research.

GENRE

Genre remains one of the key organising principles of industry infrastructures[37]. The reference to the strength of the LCRs industry infrastructure being based around prominent 'White indie artist' genres in the participant quote on page 17 is borne out by comparing the Playing In and ReMap survey data on the genres LCR music makers operate within. **Appendix 3** shows that while Black music makers engage in as wide a variety of music genres as the entire population of music makers across the LCR, Black music makers are most active within genres such as R&B, hip hop and rap, and to a lesser extent soul and jazz, which are all genres that the entire population of LCR musicians engage in far less. As one male focus group participant stated:

> **"I'VE ALWAYS FELT THERE'S A SORT OF DIVIDE... THERE IS A DIVISION BETWEEN GENRE BUT I ALSO THINK RACE COMES INTO IT AS WELL."**

Conversely, a female focus group participant talked about the challenges of engaging in particular genres:

> **"THERE IS A LOT MORE PEOPLE OF COLOUR IN MUSICAL THEATRE, BUT STILL IT'S JUST SOMETIMES IT'S NOT A GREAT PLACE TO BE IN. BECAUSE YOU'LL GET STEREOTYPED FOR CERTAIN ROLES. YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO PLAY CERTAIN THINGS, LIKE ONE OF MY DREAM ROLES IS ELLE WOODS IN LEGALLY BLONDE."**

! **Key Finding:** Certain genres of music remain difficult to access and engage with for Black LCR musicians, and contemporary popular genres such as R&B, grime and drill, when compared to their national prominence, are underrepresented across LCR industry infrastructures.

✓ **Recommendation:** LCRMB to engage with LCR public and private organisations, educators, and businesses, that have little or no engagement by Black musicians, to develop strategies that encourage and improve access and eradicate stereotyping.

ACCESSING LCR MUSIC VENUES AND EVENTS

The infrastructural constraints surrounding genre prominence are also evident in the ReMap analysis of the venues performed at and hired by participants. As focus group participants stated:

"VENUES WHERE YOU CAN GO LIKE SAY JACARANDA OR SAY LIKE THE OLD MAGNET, OR SAY PLACES LIKE THE ZANZIBAR, IT'S ALWAYS JUST WHITE MUSIC, JUST JANGLY GUITARS ALL THE TIME."

"THERE'S NO PLACE IN LIVERPOOL I CAN SAY WHEN I PERFORM THERE I FEEL AT HOME."

"BIGGER VENUES, THEY'RE THE EXCEPTION FOR HAVING A LOT OF BLACK ARTISTS PERFORM THERE, BECAUSE THE [BLACK] ARTISTS HAVE COME FROM OTHER CITIES."

"WE HAVE GOOD, INTERESTING AND VARIED VENUES IN LCR - BUT NOT ENOUGH FESTIVALS AND EVENTS GOING ON, AND THE PROGRAMMING CAN BE UNINSPIRING WITH A DEFINITE LACK OF BLACK MUSIC ON OFFER."

As the graph in **Appendix 4** shows, Black music makers and professionals perform and promote at a breadth of venues and events across the region. Yet, the majority of BMS respondents' activities are concentrated around only a few events such as LIMF and Africa Oyé, and venues including District and 24 Kitchen Street, The Everyman/Playhouse, O2 Academy, and, the now closed, Melodic Distraction. That Black musicians and practitioners only regularly access 6% of the 70 dedicated live music venues operating across the LCR[38] suggests there are limited opportunities to perform live.

"WE DO HAVE, YOU KNOW, LIMF FESTIVAL, AFRICA OYÉ. BUT THE FACT THAT I CAN NAME THEM IS NOT GOOD... WITHOUT THOSE THINGS [REGULAR GIG OPPORTUNITIES] HAPPENING IN LIVERPOOL, THEY ARE GOING TO JUST BE PERFORMANCES TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY. THE PROGRESSIONS ARE NOT GOING TO BE THERE."

This broader interview observation is supported with a specific focus group example:

"I LIKE TO PRIDE MYSELF ON BEING ONE OF THE BIGGER UP AND COMING ARTISTS OUT THERE AND I CAN'T SELL 50 TICKETS [IN LIVERPOOL] TO SAVE MY LIFE, AND I DON'T REALLY THINK THAT'S MY FAULT."

Despite the concerns expressed, some participants offered alternate perspectives:

"I ACTUALLY THINK CONSIDERING LIVERPOOL HAS A RELATIVELY SMALL BLACK COMMUNITY THAT THE REPRESENTATION IS VERY LARGE. A LOT OF THE MORE SUCCESSFUL LOCAL ACTS ARE BLACK ACTS."

This view is somewhat supported by responses to the survey question: *"How satisfied are you with access to live music venues?"* **Figure 8** results show that although only 5% were 'very satisfied', opinions were more balanced than the views expressed in the interview/focus group responses.

FIGURE 8
BMS PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION WITH ACCESS TO LCR LIVE MUSIC VENUES
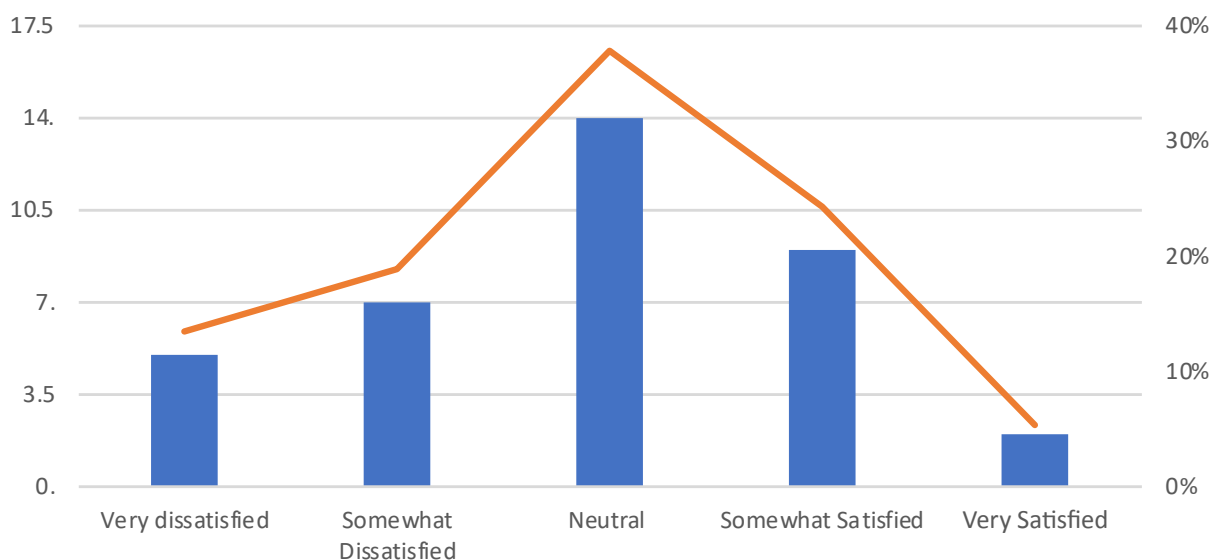
Overall, while the opportunities to perform live and/or promote events may not be as limited as interviewed participants' anecdotes suggest, taken in the round with the data on genre, the research demonstrates that live performance opportunities for Black music makers are clustered around a small number of events and spaces that programme more established artists, limiting performance and audience opportunities for local emerging Black artists and acts. This situation is more confounding and frustrating for those artists trying to forge careers in contemporary genres, because, as one participant observes about the potential for audiences:

> **"THERE'S DEFINITELY PEOPLE IN LIVERPOOL THAT LISTEN TO THE TYPE OF MUSIC THAT WE MAKE BECAUSE BLACK MUSIC [NATIONALLY] IS THE BIGGEST GENRE, BUT FOR SOME REASON THOSE SUPPORTERS ARE NOT COMING TO THE VENUES, THEY'RE NOT GETTING THAT CONNECTION WITH THOSE VENUES OR THE ARTISTS, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE DISCONNECTION IS OR WHY IT IS, BUT THERE'S DEFINITELY ONE THERE."**

Another participant observed that this sense of disconnection extends beyond audiences and is evident within the emerging scene of Black artists:

> **"I FIND LIVERPOOL IS FULL OF PEOPLE WHO DON'T REALLY DO ANYTHING. BUT THEY WANT TO BE SOMEONE, SO THEY WON'T SUPPORT US."**

The venue data in **Appendix 4** supports perceptions from participants quoted on page 16 that the limited opportunities to perform live increase the sense of competition and negative perceptions between aspiring Black artists within the region. The observation from this interview participant summarises the current regional live music sector situation succinctly:

> **"IN ORDER TO MAKE A LIVING AND MAKE IT SUSTAINABLE, IT HAS TO GET A LITTLE BIT BIGGER THAN THE OCCASIONAL SHOWS IN YOUR CITY."**

! **Key Finding:** The opportunities for Black musicians to perform and develop as performers within the LCR is currently highly dependent on the continued operation of a few critical venues and events.

✓ **Recommendation:** LCRMB to encourage all live music venues and live promoters operating across the LCR to expand their programming to include Black artists in order to increase the opportunities for Black artists and musicians to perform and develop new audiences.

✓ **Recommendation:** LCRMB to conduct a feasibility study on opening and operating a dedicated Black music hub space.

✓ **Recommendation:** LCRMB to support further research into why the audiences who attend large events performed in the region by nationally and internationally established Black acts are less inclined to attend events by local Black artists.

ACCESSING RECORDING AND REHEARSAL STUDIOS
A SUCCESS STORY

In contrast to the general dissatisfaction with live sector access, responses to a similar survey question about recording studios was far more positive as Figure 9 details.

FIGURE 9
BMS PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION WITH ACCESS TO LCR RECORDING AND REHEARSAL STUDIO ACCESS
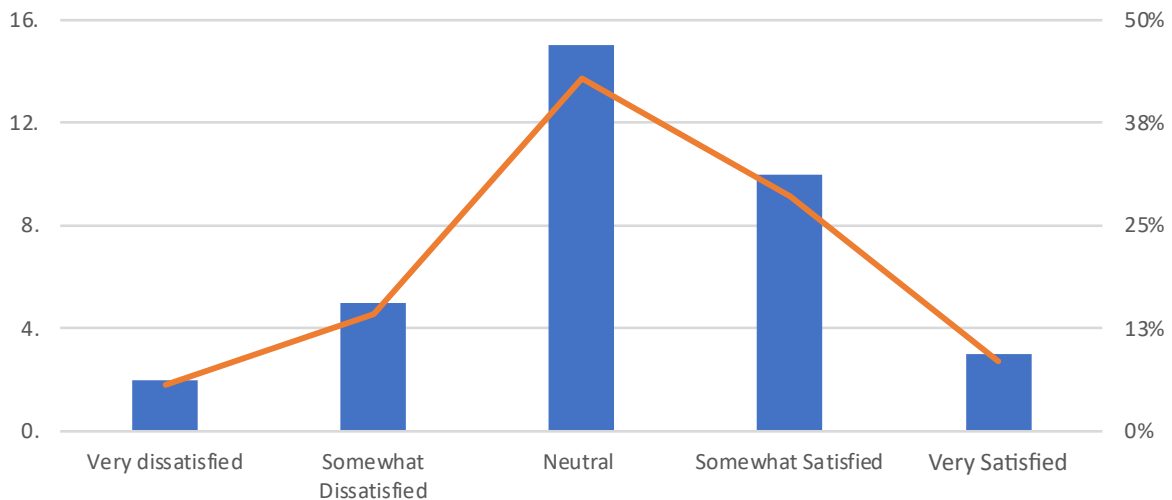
Considering this observation from an interviewee talking about the 2011 Liverpool One project, 38% current satisfaction with access to studio facilities suggests significant improvement in the past decade in this area.

> "I REMEMBER AT THE TIME, IT WAS REALLY HARD FOR ME TO GET LIKE STUDIO SPACE. SO, ONE OF THE BENEFITS WAS TO BE ABLE TO RECORD A SONG IN A STUDIO."

Despite a positive perception of studio access, as **Figure 10** demonstrates, many participants use home studios that speaks more to advances in DAW technology in the past decade than improved access[39], and most recording and rehearsal activity revolves around a few key places, such as SORT, Pirate, the now closed Parr St. and most notably GoPlay. As a survey participant observed:

> "THERE IS STILL A LACK OF ACCESS IN THE CITY FOR MUSIC OTHER THAN GUITAR BANDS AND THIS IS NOT JUST AROUND PERFORMING THIS IS ALSO IN PRODUCTION."

A recommendation to emerge from the focus groups was to "identify all of the different producers in the city" to build healthy competition and diversify the musician's options to create and record tracks to professional standards. Essentially, there has been good progress in the studio space in the past decade, as reflected in this interview participant observation:

> "WE'VE GOT SO MUCH ACCESSIBILITY TO DOING COLLABS OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE WHETHER THAT BE IN YOUR CITY OR OUTSIDE OF YOUR CITY. I FEEL LIKE THAT IS SO EASY TO DO NOW. LIKE GETTING A BUNCH OF CREATIVES TOGETHER IN A ROOM."

However, the below comment demonstrates there is still considerable work required to have a vibrant and diverse production scene that can compete nationally.

> "LIVERPOOL'S BLACK MUSIC SCENE, WHICH I THINK IS THE STRONGEST IT HAS BEEN IN YEARS, HOWEVER, I STILL THINK IT LAGS MASSIVELY BEHIND LONDON, MANCHESTER, AND BIRMINGHAM."

THE REGIONAL REHEARSAL AND RECORDING STUDIOS MOST ENGAGED WITH BY BLACK LCR MUSICIANS AND PRACTITIONERS
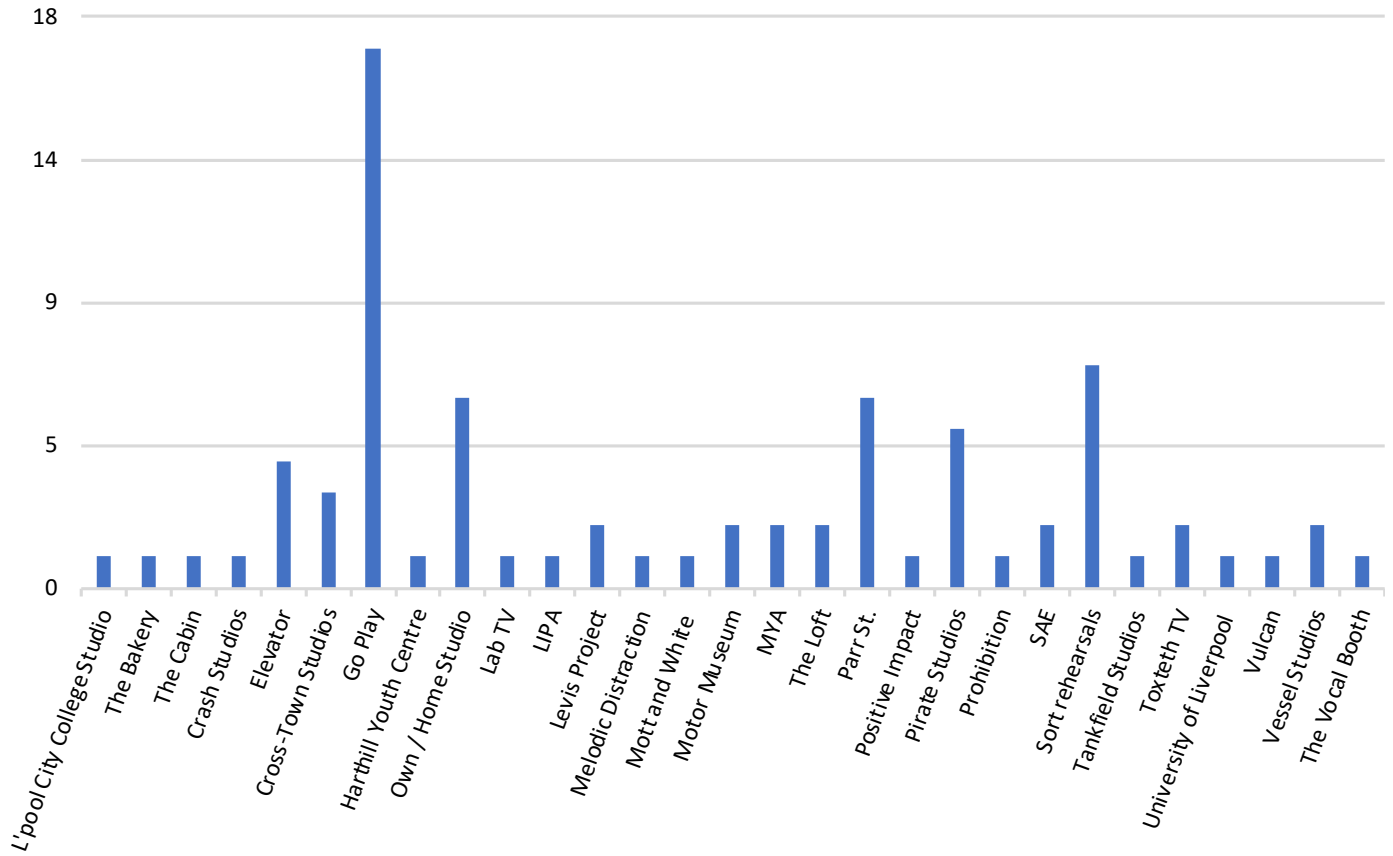
Key Finding: Although still not competing on a national scale, there has been very positive progress in improving access to recording studios and opportunities to collaborate on recordings within the LCR in the previous decade.

Recommendation: Using the positive growth and inclusive environments in the LCRs studio sector as a case study, LCRMB to explore modelling the investment in and development of LCR recording studios and apply it to other sectors of the regional industry.

REGIONAL COMPARISONS, POST CODES, SOCIALS, AND THE SCOUSE ACCENT

Poor comparisons of Liverpool with other major UK's cities' Black music infrastructures and live scenes were a consistent theme across all three elements of the research.

The experiences of a lack of access and opportunity are similar to the findings of previous research conducted with Black rap artists in Manchester[40]. This suggests Black musicians living and working in northern regions of the UK share common experiences of marginalisation, but city specific studies inevitably frame participant perspectives around seemingly localised challenges. It would be productive for UK Music's 2024 national study to consider the regional similarities and differences of Black musicians' experiences. For ReMap participants, it was evident they struggled with an overall sense of belonging and community.

"WHERE DO I FIT IN? I DIDN'T HAVE ANYWHERE WHERE I FELT ACCEPTED. I'VE GOT SUCH A BROAD SPECTRUM OF MUSIC TASTES, I LOVE DANCE MUSIC. I LISTEN TO CLASSICAL MUSIC WHEN I'M WRITING ALL THE TIME. AND I LOVE ROCK MUSIC AND I LOVE RAP AND I'M LIKE, WELL, HOW DO I FIT IN WITHOUT TICKING BOXES OF STEREOTYPES AT THE SAME TIME?"

"I THINK THERE'S LESS COMMUNITY. THERE'S A LOT OF ORGANISATION THERE'S A LOT OF THINGS GOING ON, BUT THERE'S NOT A LOT OF ACCESS YOU KNOW, WHEREAS BEFORE YOU COULD GO TO THE YOUTH CENTRE."

When comparing Liverpool's Black music scenes with other cities, as the focus group participant who talked about struggling to sell 50 tickets in Liverpool on page 28 observes about gigging outside of the city:

"IF I GO, SAY LEEDS, BRISTOL, MANCHESTER, A LOT OF THESE PLACES TO A VENUE FULL OF PEOPLE WAITING TO HEAR ME WHO'VE NEVER HEARD MY MUSIC BEFORE, I DON'T HAVE TO PROVE MYSELF TO THEM."

However, as well as positive experiences of working outside of Liverpool, participants also have to overcome and challenge negative perceptions:

"WHEN I MOVED TO LONDON, LIKE, THERE WAS A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO SAID, I THOUGHT PEOPLE FROM LIVERPOOL WERE WHITE, AND IT MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE NOT EVEN BLACK SOMETIMES."

For emerging Black artists, particularly involved in genres such as grime and drill, focus group participants identified a particular conundrum of having to establish themselves outside of Liverpool to become established in Liverpool.

"I THINK LIKE WHEN PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE THE CITY TAKE YOU IN FIRST AND THEN PEOPLE FROM THE CITY ARE GONNA TAKE YOU IN. BUT IF PEOPLE AREN'T TAKING YOU IN OUTSIDE OF THE CITY FIRST THEN NO ONE'S REALLY GOING TO TAKE YOU IN IN THIS CITY."

Conversely, participants found it difficult to establish themselves outside of Liverpool because they lack the local and regional support that artists from other UK cities use as their platform to build out from.

Social media was broadly viewed as a positive tool for growing awareness and audience beyond the confines of the region. When comparing 2011 to now, interviewees observed the differences from their formative career experiences:

"THERE'S A LOT MORE ACCESSIBILITY TO ARTISTS DIGITALLY, WHICH HAS CREATED THIS WHOLE OTHER REALM WHERE PEOPLE CAN EXPRESS THEMSELVES AND BRING THEIR MUSIC OUT THERE."

However, even in the positive assessment of opportunities afforded by social media and the internet, there is an implication that what it enables is the ability to connect outside of Liverpool to then enable profile building within the region.

> **"THE DIY NATURE OF BEING ABLE TO SUCCEED, NOT NECESSARILY RELYING ON THE BIG INDUSTRIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO GIVE THEM A PLATFORM. YEAH, THE INTERNET BEING A MASSIVE FACTOR IN BEING ABLE TO CONNECT WITH ARTISTS AND PRODUCERS UP AND DOWN THE COUNTRY WHERE IT'S ALMOST AS IF THEY'RE CONNECTING WITH EACH OTHER IN LIVERPOOL VIA PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF LIVERPOOL."**

When asked for reasons as to why it is so difficult to develop an audience in Liverpool, three key themes emerged:

1. Referencing the sense of competition for very limited opportunities, focus group participants identified a judgemental attitude and lack of trust in and support for each other and the local scene:

> **"THERE'S NO TRUST MAN. IF HE [ANOTHER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT] WAS A RANDOM JUST WALKING DOWN THE STREET, I CAN'T LIE I'D THINK WHO'S THAT. THERE'S NO LOVE MAN, BLACK PEOPLE DON'T HAVE LOVE FOR EACH OTHER."**

2. Participants observed that emerging rappers in other large UK Cities in the first instance benefit from localised support from particular areas or boroughs within those cities, so called post code support. This was viewed as problematic in Liverpool due to the specific histories and demographic distribution of the region's Black community.

> **"BECAUSE LONDON IS SO BIG IT'S LIKE, YOU SEE THE WAY SOMEONE WILL COME UP IN SOUTH LONDON AND THE SCENE IN EAST LONDON WOULD BE LIKE, AH, OUR BOY FROM AROUND THE CORNER IS WELL BETTER THAN HIM. SO, THEN EVERYONE IN SOUTH LONDON GETS BEHIND THEIR BOY... WE DON'T REALLY HAVE THAT [IN LIVERPOOL]. IT'S NOT LIKE THE PEOPLE IN [AREA IN LIVERPOOL] PUSH ME AND BE LIKE, F**K MAN FROM TOCCY, F**K [ARTIST NAME] AND THESE HUYTON GUYS, BECAUSE WE'RE FROM [AREA IN LIVERPOOL], BECAUSE WE'RE JUST ALL SCOUSERS."**

> **"I HAVE A DECENT SUPPORT IN LIVERPOOL AND NOT MUCH OF IT'S FROM TOXTETH. AND IT'S WEIRD, BECAUSE THERE AREN'T MANY OTHER AREAS IN LIVERPOOL THAT WILL BACK A BLACK RAPPER LIKE TOXTETH DOES. WHO AM I REPRESENTING REALLY?"**

3. There was recognition that nationally, *"regional accents in music are becoming a lot more accepted"*. However, participants viewed the conundrum of rapping in a Scouse accent: *"People from Liverpool only want to hear you sound Scouse"*, contrasted with, *"The Scouse accent being very, very, like taboo on a national scale"*; as epitomising the challenges of establishing regional and national profiles. The recognition of the accent issue prompted discussions about the experiences of code switching[41] when performing and working outside of Liverpool, or on national and international online forums.

> **!** **Key Finding:** In part due to the LCR's particular socio-demographic constitution, the scene for contemporary genres such as grime and drill is underdeveloped across the region and this means, without a hometown crowd, artists struggle to establish themselves nationally.

> **✓** **Recommendation:** LCRMB to work with existing and new providers to ensure the continued delivery and development of industry training programmes and consider how collectively they could be designed and coordinated to address sector specific needs.

MEDIA REPRESENTATION

The challenges of operating locally and nationally as artists in specific scenes were more widely evident in the discussion around media representation.

Representation of Black music and musicians within regional media was viewed poorly overall. As **Figure 11** illustrates, survey participants were more dissatisfied with the level of support they receive from regional mainstream media than they were with access to regional performance opportunities (See **Figure 8**). As survey participants noted:

> **"LOCAL MEDIA PICKED UP ON MY STORY BECAUSE IT WAS ALREADY IN THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRESS."**

> **"WE'RE NOT REPRESENTED IN THE MEDIA. YOU THINK THERE WAS ONLY EVER THE BEATLES AND CILLA BLACK. LIKE, IT'S BORING? DO YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN? WE'RE NOT REPRESENTED, ESPECIALLY BLACK SCOUSERS."**

FIGURE 11
PARTICIPANT ATTITUDES TOWARD MAINSTREAM REGIONAL MEDIA ACCESS
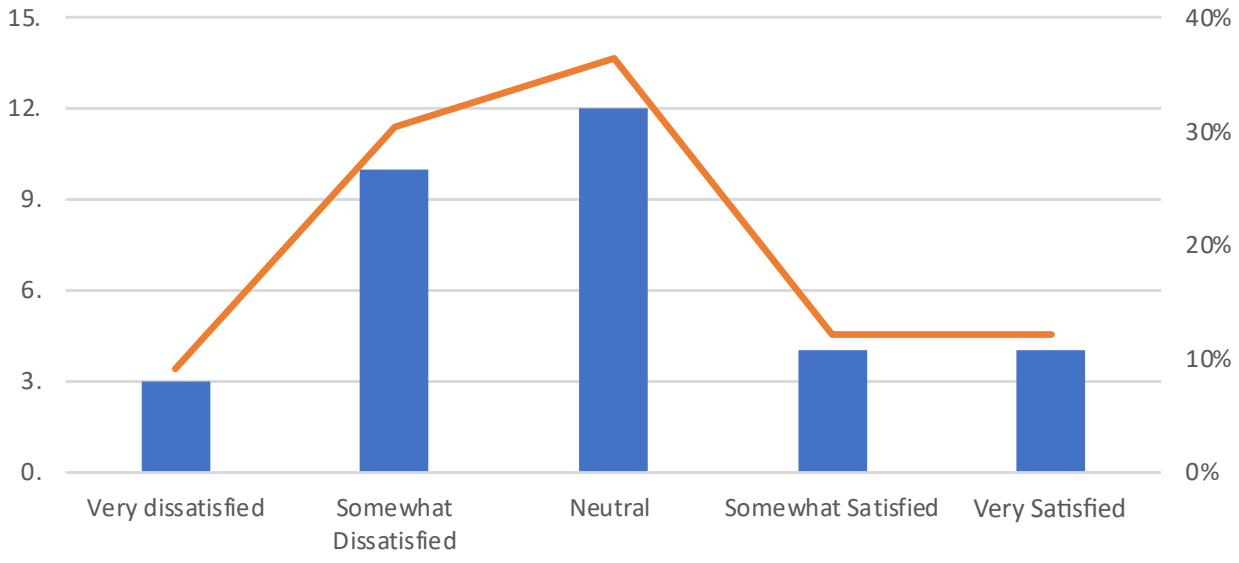
Once again, as **Figure 12** demonstrates, while a wide range of media outlets have engaged with Black music makers/practitioners, most opportunities to be featured in or work with LCR media outlets cluster around a few organisations.

FIGURE 12
THE REGIONAL MEDIA OUTLETS MOST ENGAGED WITH BY BLACK LCR MUSICIANS AND PRACTITIONERS
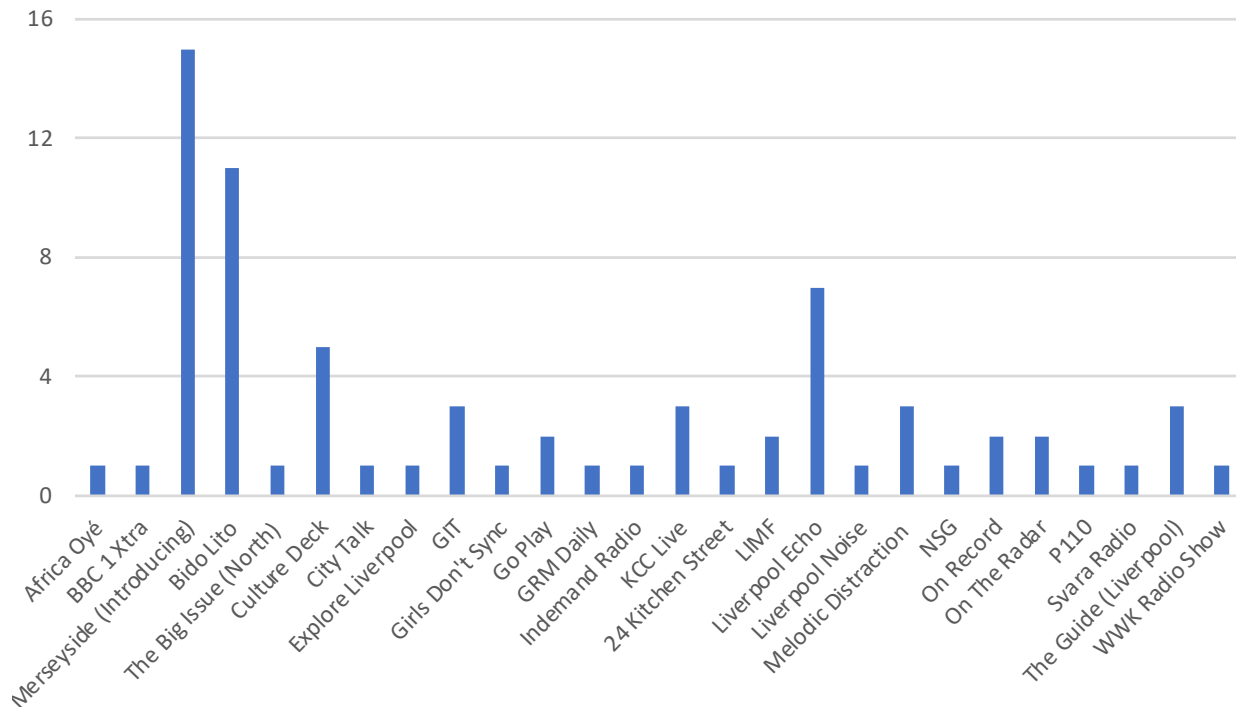
There is clearly strong support from BBC Merseyside and Dave Monk's Introducing show, and the now defunct Bido Lito and Melodic Distraction also offered good press/online exposure, a gap potentially filled by the likes of Culture Deck, The Echo, and The Guide. Overall, the narrowness of the number of outlets regularly used is perhaps part of the reason, as **Figure 13** shows, why there was such a strong negative response when participants were surveyed as to their agreement with this statement: *'Promotion and recognition happen less frequently for Black people in the LCR music scene compared to people who are not Black.'*

FIGURE 13
PARTICIPANT ATTITUDES TOWARD PROMOTION FROM REGIONAL MEDIA OUTLETS
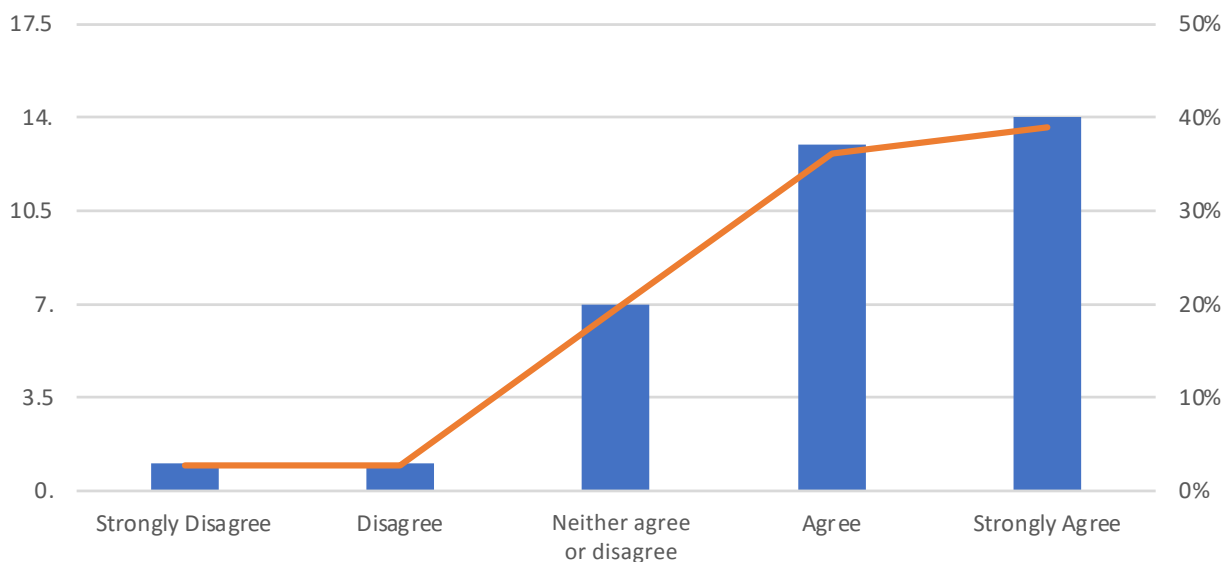
Participants suggested that a lack of media exposure is in part an element of the wider lack of infrastructure.

> **"AS FAR AS I'M AWARE OF, THERE'S NO PRS, MARKETEERS ETC. IN THE CITY, ESPECIALLY FOR BLACK MUSIC, THERE WILL BE FOR SOME INDIE STUFF, OBVIOUSLY."**

Despite the generally negative perceptions of local media there was also a sense amongst young focus group participants that the current scene just needed a 'talismanic figure' to break nationally to make the entire scene more visible.

> **"I WANT THE SCENE TO BE LIKE MANCHESTER TO BE LIKE LONDON. THERE'S SO MUCH TALENT HERE THAT NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT. SO, I FEEL LIKE IT NEEDS THAT PERSON TO LIKE BREAK THROUGH TO LIKE SHINE THAT LIGHT."**

As this quote from an interview participant recalling their early career development in the mid-2000s affirms, LCR Black artists have been without nationally and internationally successful role models for a number of decades[42]:

> **"THE REAL THING WERE A MYTH, AND THE CHRISTIANS WERE A BAND BAND."**

While Liverpool as a city has continued to produce artists and acts that resulted in it being listed as the most successful city outside of London for artist record sales in 2022[43], the dearth of success for LCR Black acts and artists is confounding and perplexing. The range of infrastructural issues outlined in this report are considerable. Even if a Black LCR artist were to have success in the next few years, without an improved overall regional Black music industry infrastructure in place, it will be challenging to capitalise upon any anticipated trickle-down effect.

! **Key Finding:** Opportunities for Black artists to be featured in and supported by regional media outlets are severely limited.

✓ **Recommendation:** LCRMB to explore avenues for more dedicated local and regional media exposure.
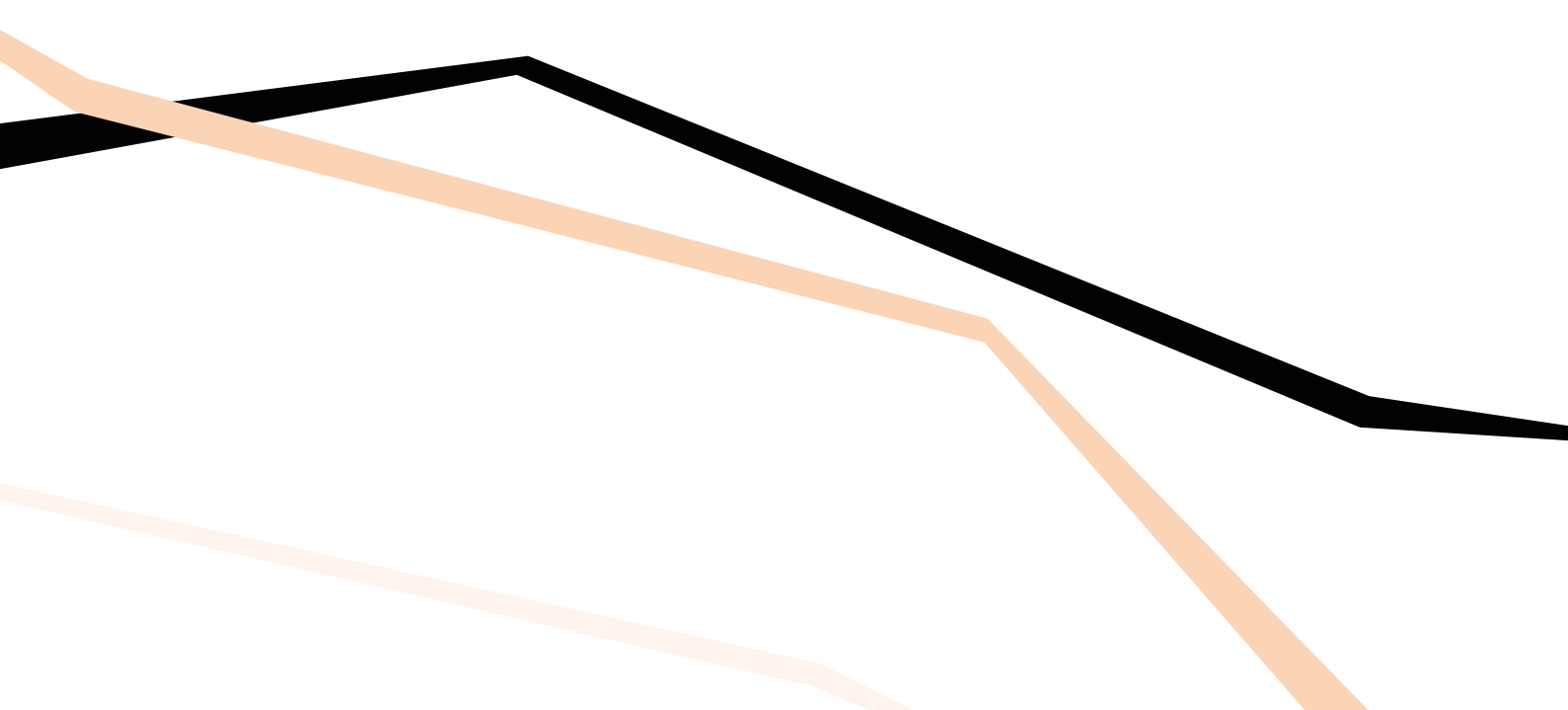
ACCESS TO FUNDING

A challenge for all artists and musicians in developing and sustaining music careers, particularly in the early stages, is accessing funding. As **Figure 14** demonstrates, although generally there was decent awareness of the range of funding available amongst survey participants, out of 63 applications 49% were successful. This figure is broadly consistent with 52% in the BLIM report[44] for Black creators having one successful funding application, although, as the BLIM research demonstrates, this is far below the 72% of successful White applicants.

Across the LCR, while BMMs had received more funding, LCR BMPs attracted higher combined funding totals. Of all of those who were successful, 48% received combined total award amounts for £1,000 or less, with 25% receiving £100 or less. Whereas 16% had been awarded a combined total of funding in excess of £30,000.

FIGURE 14
PATTERN OF SURVEY PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT WITH MUSIC INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT FUNDING BODIES
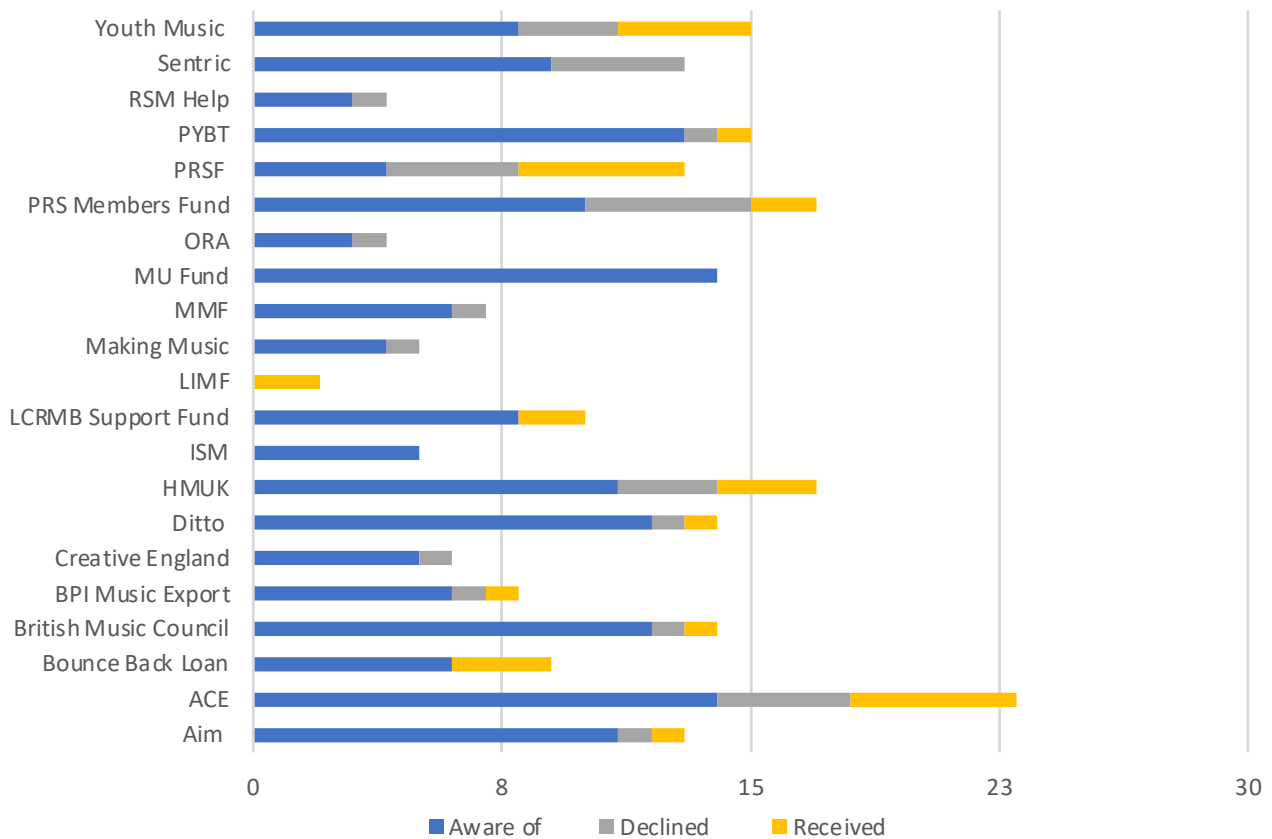
Key Finding: The number of Black LCR musicians and practitioners in receipt of funding is broadly consistent with the national picture.

Recommendation: Assuming, as the data suggests, the LCR receives a comparable amount of individual and organisational funding as the rest of the UK, LCRMB should conduct research to establish how future funding can be deployed in a way that strategically benefits and invests in the regional Black music economy and sector.

LONGER-TERM CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Whereas the previous section addressed the immediate challenges of working and pursuing careers within the LCRs music industry in 2022/23, this final section considers longer-term issues such as education, training, and mentoring.

EDUCATION

When discussing their current experience of a music course at college, a female focus group participant encapsulated the feelings of exclusion and difference expressed by most participants when discussing their experiences of education from primary school through to higher education.

> **"MY CLASS IS ALL WHITE EXCEPT FOR ME. SO THAT'S VERY COMMON TO SAY. THERE'S LITTLE COMMENTS SOMETIMES THAT PEOPLE MAKE AND DON'T REALISE YOU KNOW, WHEN A LOT OF THE THINGS HAVE TO DO WITH HAIR, BECAUSE I HAVE AN AFRO, AND THEY WANT CERTAIN STYLES FOR YOUR HAIR FOR CERTAIN THINGS LIKE WE WANT IT SLICKED BACK, LONG PONYTAIL AND I CAN'T DO A LONG PONYTAIL WITH AN AFRO. SO, THEY HAVE TO WORK AROUND ME AND IT'S NOT 100% INCLUSIVE AT TIMES, BUT I THINK IN CERTAIN WAYS IT HAS PREPARED ME FOR WHAT'S GOING ON."**

The acceptance and resignation that this is 'just how things are' evident in this quote implies that the structural racism experienced across the regional industry is also embedded in the education and training of the region's aspiring Black musicians.

While collecting data on experiences of discrimination in educational settings was beyond the scope of this research, survey participant data on music specific educational attainment demonstrates varied levels of engagement with formal music education. Of the 33 participants who answered the music qualification question 33% achieved qualifications at A-level or above, 35% have no music specific qualifications, and 16% have music theory qualifications. While not directly comparable with the data presented in the BLIM report[45], or the 2023 UK Musician Census data[46], generally the **Figure 15** data suggests that Black LCR music makers and practitioners hold fewer formal music qualifications when compared with data on music education for Global Majority people across the UK.

FIGURE 15
WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT HIGHEST LEVEL OF MUSIC RELATED QUALIFICATION?

11% 11% 14% 5% 5% 5% 14% 35%

- ABRSM Theory & Performance Grades
- LCM Theory & Performance Grades
- A-Level / BTec or equivalent
- Masters Degree
- GCSE
- Undergraduate Degree
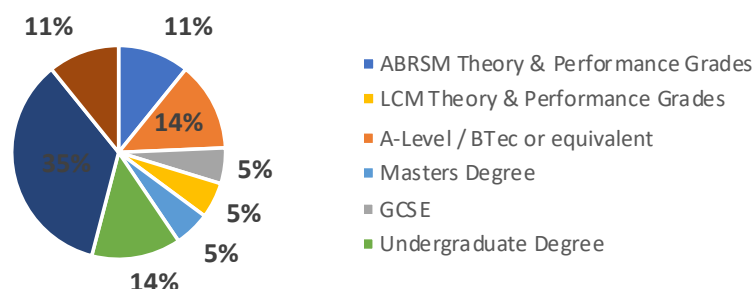
The autodidactic approach to music education adopted across the LCR is underlined by survey respondents' answers to the question: *'How did you first learn music?'* Of the 31 participants who responded to this question 45% are self-taught, compared to 16% who started their music education at school (see **Figure 16**).

FIGURE 16
SURVEY PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION HOW DID YOU FIRST LEARN MUSIC?
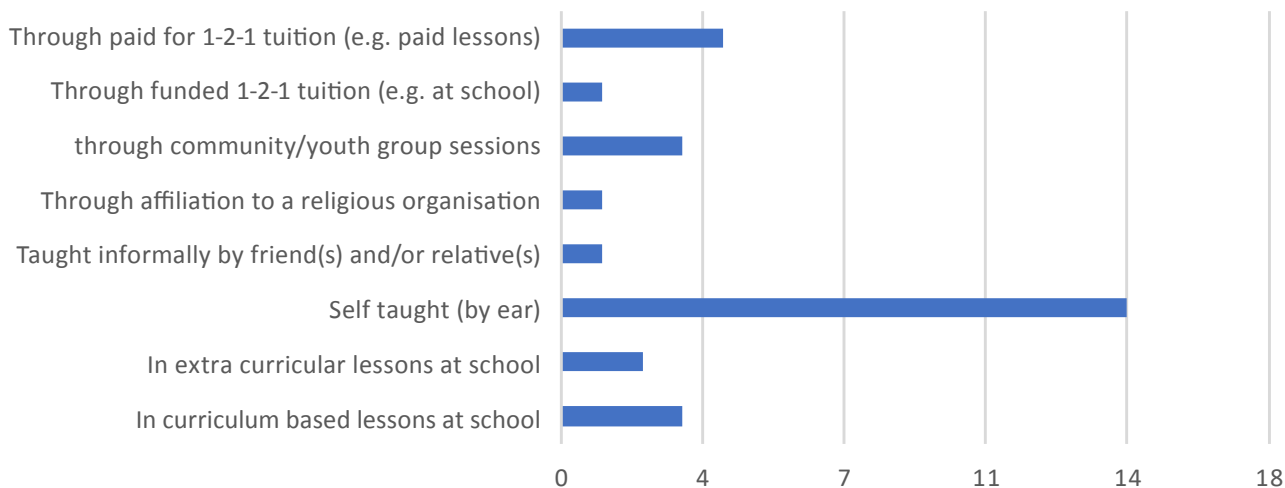
This potential lack of comparable formal music education was identified by one of the experienced male interview participants as a foundational issue that eventually tracks through into professional situations. When discussing working with musicians from outside of the region in professional settings, they observed:

> **"WE'VE GOT THE PASSION TO BE MUSICIANS. WE'VE GOT ALL THE RIGHT INTENTIONS. BUT VERY, VERY RARELY DO WE HAVE ANY OF THE TRAINING, AND IT SHOWS WHEN YOU STAND TOE TO TOE NEXT TO SOMEBODY."**

While recognising the underrepresentation of Black students on higher education music programmes nationally[47], a positive indication in the survey data is that all but one of the 18-24-year old's hold a music specific qualification, suggesting there is already a direction of travel toward higher levels of engagement with formal education, training, and qualification attainment.

Outside of formal qualifications, 62% of survey participants expressed they were either 'somewhat satisfied' (23%) or 'very satisfied' (39%) with music related training programmes they had attended that were delivered across the LCR by Ditto Music, Future Yard, LIMF Academy, Positive Impact, PRSF, Sound City, The Ultimate Seminar and MYA Noise Project. Only 14% of survey participants were dissatisfied with this provision, suggesting there are good options within the LCR (provided programmes continue to run) for Black musicians and practitioners to upskill and develop beyond and outside of formal education settings. However, across the interviews and focus groups there was a consensus that more needed to be done earlier in Black people's music education to encourage engagement with music and nurture talent.

Figure 17 shows at what stage in their educational journey survey participants first engaged with music and suggest there are three key points of engagement: at primary school age, secondary school age, and as an adult, with secondary school age accounting for 41%. With the UK Government's recently published National Plan for Music Education[48] detailing minimum music provision expectations for all English and Welsh primary and secondary schools, and a redefined role for Music Education Hubs, consideration must be given to how young Black people across the region can productively engage with secondary school music provision in particular. None of the survey participants had engaged with the region's Music Hubs. These results may not be representative but a key consideration during the 2023-24 reorganisation of local Music Hubs[49] could be how to engage more Black teenagers in music making activities.

FIGURE 17
SURVEY PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION - WHEN DID YOU FIRST ENGAGE WITH MUSIC?

- At college / university
- As an adult
- Pre-school age
- Primary school age
- Junior school age
- Senior school age
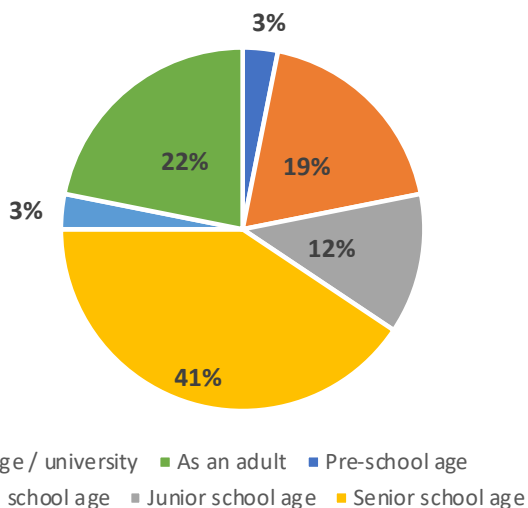
Whereas maintaining and improving the satisfaction with industry training provision and productively engaging in the debates and design of school provision within the National Plan and Music Hub restructure are potentially all positive and productive initiatives, the key issue to address from across the research was one of representation.

> "BECAUSE I SAW A BLACK PERSON AS A TEACHER, I ENROLLED FOR THE TALENT SHOW WE HAD IN SCHOOL."

The above focus group participant quote summarises the views expressed by the majority of participants: that engaging with a Black music teacher or tutor during their formative educational experiences was not only inspirational but legitimised their personal ambitions, demonstrated those ambitions could be fulfilled, and offered a role model to follow toward achieving them. However, the following participant quote from the same focus group underlines the scale of the challenge.

> "I REALLY HOPE THAT ONE DAY THERE IS A PLACE THAT IS RUN BY A DIVERSE GROUP OF PEOPLE BUT I DON'T THINK I'VE SEEN A SINGLE TEACHER WHO WAS NOT WHITE IN MY COLLEGE."

It is beyond the scope of this research to quantify the representation of Black music (peripatetic) teachers, lecturers, tutors, and classroom assistants across LCR schools, colleges and universities. What is evident from this research is the significance to Black students of seeing and working with Black tutors. Unfortunately, this was an uncommon experience for the participants involved in this research, and the majority called for the development of a long-term multi-agency strategy toward addressing this issue. Participants across the research considered this a key initiative toward inspiring and nurturing future generations of Black music makers from the region to have the skills knowledge and abilities to operate across national and international professional music contexts.

Key Finding: There is anecdotal evidence of structural racism in the LCR's music education settings and a lack of Black staff for students to learn from and look to as role models.

Recommendation: LCRMB and regional education stakeholders to consider how the National Plan for Music Education can be delivered to encourage engagement with music by Black pupils at all levels of education.

Recommendation: LCRMB to work with the Music Hubs to ensure the reconfigured structure (moving from local authority to an LCR wide delivery – provider to be confirmed – from Sept 2024) proactively engages Black teenagers in music education.

Key Finding: There are a good range of industry-based training programmes across the LCR that support the artistic and career development of Black musicians and practitioners.

THE IMPORTANCE AND CHALLENGES OF MENTORING

Alongside the demand for a talismanic artist that acts as a catalyst for the LCR's underground rap scene to achieve national prominence, and the call for more Black educators to be visible role models in schools, colleges and universities, participants across the research emphasised the importance of mentoring. As an industry experienced interview participant asserted:

> "FOR A BLACK ARTIST IN LIVERPOOL WITHOUT EXPERIENCED MENTORS, IT'S DEFINITELY GONNA BE DIFFICULT. SO, WHAT WE REALLY SHOULD BE DOING IS FINDING A WAY TO CONNECT THEM WITH PEOPLE THAT KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING."

These requests are largely consistent with a wider industry recognition of the importance of mentors[50]. From the role descriptions in **Appendix 1** it is evident 35% of survey participants are already involved in mentoring, but for the majority 62% this mentoring is undertaken in an informal capacity. The challenges of informal mentoring are captured directly in this participant quote:

> "WE WANT TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HELPING OTHER BLACK PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS. WHAT HAPPENS WITH THAT, THOUGH, IS THAT, BEFORE WE KNOW IT, WE FIND OURSELVES IN ROLES, THAT WAS NEVER OUR INTENTION TO BE IN. SO SUDDENLY, WE'RE IN ROLES WHERE WE ARE DEVELOPING STRATEGY, AND MAKING TIME FOR THAT ROLE THAT MAYBE WE WEREN'T NECESSARILY TRAINED TO DO."

Moreover, mentoring of upcoming LCR Black artists and professionals by more established LCR industry professionals was not viewed as sufficient by some participants due to the current lack of infrastructure:

> "IT'S GONNA TAKE, YOU KNOW, EITHER GETTING OUT THERE AND CONNECTING WITH MENTORS FROM OUTSIDE OF THE CITY. AND THE ONLY REASON I SAY OUTSIDE OF THE CITY, I'M TALKING ABOUT CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE ACTIVELY IN THE INDUSTRY. EVEN THOUGH WE'VE GOT ARTISTS AND CREATORS IN THE FIELD, WE DON'T HAVE AN INDUSTRY."

Key Finding: A considerable amount of largely informal mentoring already takes place within the LCRs Black music communities, but this places responsibilities upon mentors who do not necessarily have the time or training to fulfil the requirements of the role.

Recommendation: The LCRMB to allocate a portion of the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) Training and Development budget toward devising and delivering a professional network scheme for emerging LCR-Black music creators, creatives, and industry professionals. The scheme should include mentoring (and mentor training), professional coaching, peer support and mental health support. LCRMB to ensure the mentors on the proposed scheme must be trained, paid, and recruited based upon the strength of their industry knowledge and networks not their location within or proximity to the region.

CONCLUSION

The ReMap research set out to address three core questions. Drawing upon the preceding analysis, the concluding section collates the key findings as a response to the first question, all the recommendations as a response to the second question, and some final thoughts on further actions in response to the final question.

QUESTION 1.
WHY DOES LIVERPOOL'S BLACK MUSIC COMMUNITY REMAIN UNDERREPRESENTED IN THE LCR'S WIDER MUSIC ECONOMY?

Listed below are the 16 key findings from this research, supported by further analysis, that address this question.

1. There is a small but significant number of highly experienced Black Music Practitioners who have developed sustainable music industry careers living and working in Liverpool.

2. The region's Black music makers are predominantly 35 or under with 70% earning £15k or less a year from their music activities.

3. The LCR music industry infrastructures that support project and career development are fragmented and difficult to identify and access for Black musicians.

4. There is insufficient Black practitioner representation within the core regional music industry sectors of live, recording and publishing.

5. Broadly consistent with the UK wide data, racism and other forms of discrimination are common and consistent across the Liverpool City Region music sector.

6. The research indicates structural racism is most evident within Liverpool City Region music sector workplaces, across the live sector, and on social media.

7. There is a perceived lack of Black representation at senior management levels across LCR's music organizations.

8. Certain genres of music remain difficult to access and engage with for Black LCR musicians, and contemporary popular genres such as R&B, grime, and drill, when compared to their national prominence, are underrepresented across LCR industry infrastructures.

9. The opportunities for Black musicians to perform and develop as performers within the LCR is currently highly dependent on the continued operation of a few critical venues and events.

10. Although still not competing on a national scale, there has been very positive progress in improving access to recording studios and opportunities to collaborate on recordings within the LCR in the previous decade.

11. In part due to Liverpool's particular socio-demographic constitution, the scene for contemporary genres such as grime and drill is underdeveloped across the region, and this means, without a hometown crowd, artists struggle to establish themselves nationally.

12. Opportunities for Black artists to be featured in and supported by regional media outlets are severely limited.

13. The number of Black LCR musicians and practitioners in receipt of funding is broadly consistent with the national picture.

14. There is anecdotal evidence of structural racism in the LCR's music education settings and a lack of Black staff for students to learn from and look to as role models.

15. There are a good range of industry-based training programmes across the LCR that support the artistic and career development of Black musicians and practitioners.

16. A considerable amount of largely informal mentoring already takes place within the LCRs Black music communities, but this places responsibilities upon mentors who do not necessarily have the time or training to fulfil the requirements of the role.

Reflecting the pros and cons expressed in the key findings, many participants felt progress, albeit slow, had happened in the past decade.

> "THERE IS A SUPPORT NETWORK BETWEEN BLACK PEOPLE WORKING WITHIN THE CITY THAT'S CONTINUING TO GET STRONGER AND STRONGER. SO, I DO SEE THAT CHANGE HAS HAPPENED. AND I DO HAVE FAITH THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO."

However, when considering:

- the persistent experiences of racism, particularly in the workplace and live music sector;

- the underrepresentation of the genres Black music makers favour across the wider regional scene;

- that opportunities to record, perform and promote music are clustered around a few organisations within each sector;

that all these factors increase competition between LCR Black artists for limited professional opportunities, and even if those opportunities are realised will result in a career that, for the majority, offers earnings between the national minimum and median wage, there is also clearly justification for the below participant observation:

> **"LIVERPOOL HAS NEVER BEEN A PLACE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR BLACK PEOPLE. ALL BLACK SCOUSERS KNOW IF YOU WANT TO SUCCEED YOU EITHER HAVE TO LEAVE LIVERPOOL OR WORK REMOTELY. MOST OF MY CLIENTS ARE NOT LIVERPOOL BASED. LIVERPOOL ACCOUNTS FOR A VERY SMALL PART OF MY INCOME."**

The closing of Bido Lito, Parr St. Studios, Melodic Distraction and East Village Arts Club (since reopened), as organisations that have been consistently engaged by Black music makers/practitioners, highlights the precarity of the existing infrastructures and poses the question what can/will replace the opportunities they offered?

This consistent systemic precarity and uncertainty within the LCR's Black music sector, coupled with few prospects for profitability, makes the substantial investment required to provide the places, spaces, and the industry expertise necessary to develop a self-sustaining Black music ecology across the region a very high-risk venture for any commercial operator. Moreover, the challenge of bolstering the LCR's Black music sector is compounded by the need to allocate considerable public and private resources and investment to improve the regional sector infrastructure, while at the same time the need to invest in improving the connection to and profile within the national music industries. To de-risk the level of investment required, attract inward commercial investment, and fully deliver the below recommendations, the findings of this report suggest initial public funding is required to establish a sustainable infrastructure for the LCR Black music economy.

QUESTION 2.
WHAT CAN BE DONE TO INCREASE PARITY BETWEEN LIVERPOOL-BASED EMERGING AND ESTABLISHED BLACK MUSIC ARTISTS AND THEIR EQUIVALENTS FROM OTHER DEMOGRAPHICS?

The LCR music industry infrastructure can support aspiring Black musicians by strategically enacting as many of the 22 recommendations from this report as possible:

1. Through a mapping exercise, LCRMB to identify current LCR Black music professionals and develop exemplar case studies around their career journeys and identify points of synergy in their professional development.

2. LCRMB to produce career profiles of the LCR's Black music professionals and feature them on the blog on the LCRMB webpage and promote on social media.

3. LCRMB to work with relevant talent development programmes to target and secure higher-level funding specifically aimed at elevating the local and national profiles of LCR-based Black artists and industry professionals engaged in contemporary Black music scenes.

4. LCRMB to support further research as to why the survey data suggests there are hardly any 35-55-year-old Black music makers active within the region, and, if accurate, explore what impact this has on the Black music ecosystem.

5. Through a mapping exercise, LCRMB to identify all Black owned and operated music related businesses and organisations across the LCR to establish and capitalise upon areas of sectoral strength and identify areas that require infrastructural development.

6. LCRMB to organise and facilitate proactive networking and showcase events to foster conversation and collaboration, and bring together individuals and organisations from across the region, including those with experience in records and publishing that cater to contemporary genres.

7. LCRMB to work with regional live, recording and publishing businesses to encourage the training and development of Black practitioners within these sectors. This may include the signposting to effective and approved training programmes and facilitators.

8. Building upon the Black Music Manifesto, the Liverpool City Region Music Board (LCRMB) to produce a clear Liverpool City Region (LCR) Black music strategy that balances competing regional and national agendas toward an agreed set of prioritised aims and develops a suite of policies, strategies, and initiatives that businesses and organisations across the LCR music sector can adopt and apply in tackling direct and indirect racism.

9. LCRMB to support more detailed research on music industry workplaces and the live sector as to the prominence and prevalence of racism within these areas, and produce sector specific guidance for adoption by workers, businesses, and organisations to address the root causes of the issues.

10. Supporting UK Music's Music Manifesto pledge to progress diversity and inclusion, LCRMB to work with the Liverpool City Region's Race Equality Hub, and build alliances and partnerships with national partners focused on DEI and Anti-Black Racism within the UK Music industry, such as BLIM, PRS Foundation's Power Up, and the Musicians' Union, to lobby for improved regulation of Anti-Black Racism in the UK Music Industry.

11. LCRMB to conduct research on LCR music sector workforce demographics to establish baseline employment data on the region's music sector.

12. LCRMB to engage with LCR public and private organisations, educators, and businesses, that have little or no engagement by Black musicians, to develop strategies that encourage and improve access and eradicate stereotyping.

13. LCRMB to encourage all live music venues and live promoters operating across the LCR to expand their programming to include Black artists in order to increase the opportunities for Black artists and musicians to perform and develop new audiences.

14. LCRMB to conduct a feasibility study on opening and operating a dedicated Black music hub space.

15. LCRMB to support further research into why the audiences who attend large events performed in the region by nationally and internationally established Black acts are less inclined to attend events by local Black artists.

16. Using the positive growth and inclusive environments in the LCRs studio sector as a case study, LCRMB to explore modelling the investment in and development of LCR recording studios and apply it to other sectors of the regional industry.

17. LCRMB to work with existing and new providers to ensure the continued delivery and development of industry training programmes and consider how collectively they could be designed and coordinated to address sector specific needs.

18. LCRMB to explore avenues for more dedicated local and regional media exposure.

19. Assuming, as the data suggests, the LCR receives a comparable amount of individual and organisational funding as the rest of the UK, LCRMB should conduct research to establish how future funding can be deployed in a way that strategically benefits and invests in the regional Black music economy and sector.

20. LCRMB and regional education stakeholders to consider how the National Plan for Music Education can be delivered to encourage engagement with music by Black pupils at all levels of education.

21. LCRMB to work with the Music Hubs to ensure the reconfigured structure (moving from local authority to an LCR wide delivery – provider to be confirmed – from Sept 2024) proactively engages Black teenagers in music education.

22. The LCRMB to allocate a portion of the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) Training and Development budget toward devising and delivering a professional network scheme for emerging LCR-Black music creators, creatives, and industry professionals. The scheme should include mentoring (and mentor training), professional coaching, peer support and mental health support. LCRMB to ensure the mentors on the proposed scheme must be trained, paid, and recruited based upon the strength of their industry knowledge and networks, not their location within or proximity to the region.

QUESTION 3
HOW CAN THE LCR'S MUSIC INDUSTRY INFRASTRUCTURE BE DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT ASPIRING BLACK MUSICIANS?

As this focus group participant quote exemplifies, there is a representational cycle that needs breaking for the Black music community to be more prominent in the LCR's music economy.

> "I JUST FEEL LIKE THAT DIVIDE ONLY HAPPENS BECAUSE WE'RE NOT SEEING OURSELVES REPRESENTED AND WE'RE NOT WANTING TO GO INTO ANYTHING WHICH THEN CAUSES MORE PEOPLE NOT WANTING TO GO INTO THINGS. SO, IT'S JUST A CYCLE THAT GOES ON AND ON."

Beyond the direct remit and capability of the LCRMB, the research identifies core structural issues that require coordinated and long-term policies and interventions. Addressing these challenges demands the continued engagement and effort of multiple stakeholders across the public and private sectors of the LCR's music industry. To achieve a worthwhile and longstanding change will require action and as one participant put it activism:

> "AND BY ACTIVISM, I MEAN, PUTTING YOUR HEAD ABOVE THE PARAPET, AND BEING PROACTIVE IN YOUR INTOLERANCE, OF THE STATUS QUO BEING AN UNFAIR ONE."

Ultimately it is only through everyone involved in the LCR's music industry infrastructures being proactive in their intolerance of the unfair status quo that substantive change can occur. The minimum aim for this research and report is that it enables people to be more aware of the challenges and make positive personal, organisational and policy changes toward a more inclusive and representative regional music economy. Then we can but hope the cycle breaks, and in 2030, when a young aspiring Black musician is asked "what does the Liverpool music industry mean to you?" Their response will not be the same as this 2022 focus group participant:

> "THE BEATLES. LOOK AT THE BEATLES. IT'S CALLED THE MERSEYBEAT GENRE ISN'T IT. THAT'S THE GENRE AND LIKE, THE JANGLY GUITARS. IT'S WHITE PEOPLE MUSIC AND LIVERPOOL IS BASED ON THAT. HOW ARE WE GOING TO SURPASS THE IMAGE OF LIVERPOOL BEING A WHITE CITY?"
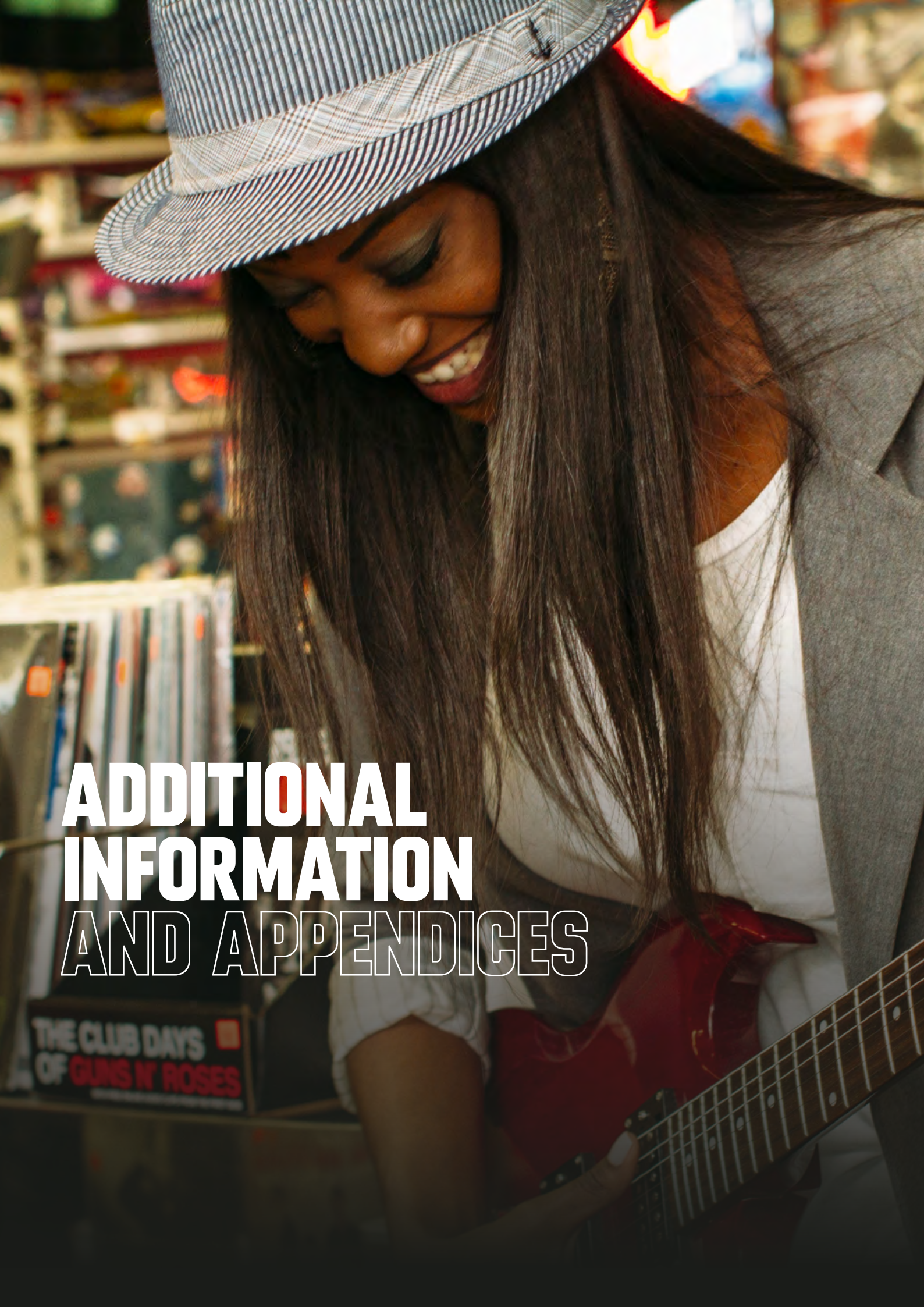
ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION
AND APPENDICES

ABOUT
THE AUTHOR

Dr Mathew Flynn is a Senior lecturer in Music Industries at University of Liverpool, Assistant Director of the Institute of Popular Music, and a member of the Liverpool City Region Music Board. His research focuses on music makers' decision-making, Liverpool's music sector, music policy and copyright. Recently he has been the lead researcher on Liverpool's Live Music Map, part of an international live sector mapping project, and produced the research and business case that saw the return of night-buses to the Liverpool City Region.

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- Hayley Downey – HD Marketing and Communications

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METHODOLOGIES

TABLE 1: Participants were asked to indicate which one income band best represents their typical annual earnings (excluding the impact of Covid) from just music related activity? The table shows the percentage of total responses for each income bracket.

FIGURE 4: Participants could select as many options as relevant to the question: *In which sector of the music industry do you primarily work?* There was no limit on the number of responses and the results of the multiple responses were then totalled together.

APPENDIX 1: Participants were asked to select up to seven main roles they are normally most involved in. The results of all the responses for each role were then totalled together.

FIGURE 5: Totals all the responses to this survey request to each participant: Considering your current industry networks, please put the (estimated) number of LCR music professionals for each role and context in the following table. E.g., If you have worked directly with two managers, put 2 in the first column. If one of those managers is Black put 1 in the second column. (If any category doesn't apply to you, please just leave 'please select' or put 0 in column 1)

FIGURE 6: Totals all the responses to the BLIM adapted question: *Have you faced discrimination in the LCR music sector and on which basis?* (Please select as many as relevant).

TABLE 2: Totals and then presents as percentages all the responses to the BLIM adapted question: In terms of your experience of racial discrimination, please indicate across the range of contexts listed on the below grid, the forms of racism you have experienced or witnessed within the LCR.

FIGURE 7: In the survey, if the participant responded that they had witnessed or experienced racial discrimination in any particular scenario, as represented in Table 2, they were prompted to complete the follow up question: P*lease indicate how often you experience any form of racism within this context?* The graph shows the total number of responses across the 6-point Likert scale for each scenario.

APPENDIX 3: Totals all responses to the question: *Which of the below broad genre categories would you place your previously self-identified genre definition within?* There was no limit on the number of genres a participant could select from the drop-down menu of 40 options.

APPENDIX 4: Totals all responses to the question: *Within your role(s), in priority order please name up to the top five places and spaces within the Liverpool City Region that you use?*

FIGURE 10: Totals all responses to the question: *Within your role(s), in priority order please name up to the top five recording / production / rehearsal studios within the Liverpool City Region that you use?*

FIGURE 12: Totals all responses to the question: *Which LCR media outlets feature / contact / work with you the most?* There was no limit on the number of responses a participant could select.

FIGURE 14: Totals all responses to the question: *Are you aware of or have ever applied for any music specific funding?* There was no limit on the number of responses a participant could select.

APPENDIX 1

BMS PARTICIPANTS BY INDUSTRY ROLES BY TYPE AND NUMBER

Legend: ■ Maker ■ Practitioner

Categories (top to bottom): A&R, Arranger, Band Member Playing Original Music, Booker, Booking Agent, Branding, Broadcaster, Business Owner / Manager, Community Work, Composer, Consultant, DJ, Distributor, Entreprenuer / Founder, Function Musician, Influencer, Journalist, Manager, Marketing, Media /Content Creator, Mentor (Formal), Mentor (Informal), Musical Director / Conductor, PR, Producer / Remixer / Programmer, Promoter, Record Label (Work at), Session Musician, Solo Artist, Songwriter, Studio Engineer, Studio Producer, Studio Tech, Talent Development, Teacher Education, Youth Support Work

APPENDIX 2

COMPARISON ON AGREEMENT WITH DISCRIMINATION STATEMENTS BETWEEN NATIONAL AND REGIONAL SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

PROPORTIONS OF BLACK MUSIC MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS WHO AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

Statement	Liverpool	Black Lives in Music
I have been offered contracts that compare unfavourably with my non-Black contemporaries	35	43
I have been ignored, overlooked or dismissed in important conversations about my own music with people who can influence my career progression	59	49
I've had to ignore comments that were racist or microaggressive in order to progress	61	64
I have watched non-Black contemporaries promoted ahead of me despite them being less qualified	60	57
I have been paid at a lower rate than other music makers	50	41
My music skills/qualifications have been questioned in detail by people who can influence my career progression	30	40
I have been pigeon-holed into a music genre that is not true to me	48	40

■ Liverpool ■ Black Lives in Music

APPENDIX 3

COMPARISON OF GENRES ENGAGED IN BETWEEN BMS AND PI MUSIC MAKERS

Playing In   Black MMS
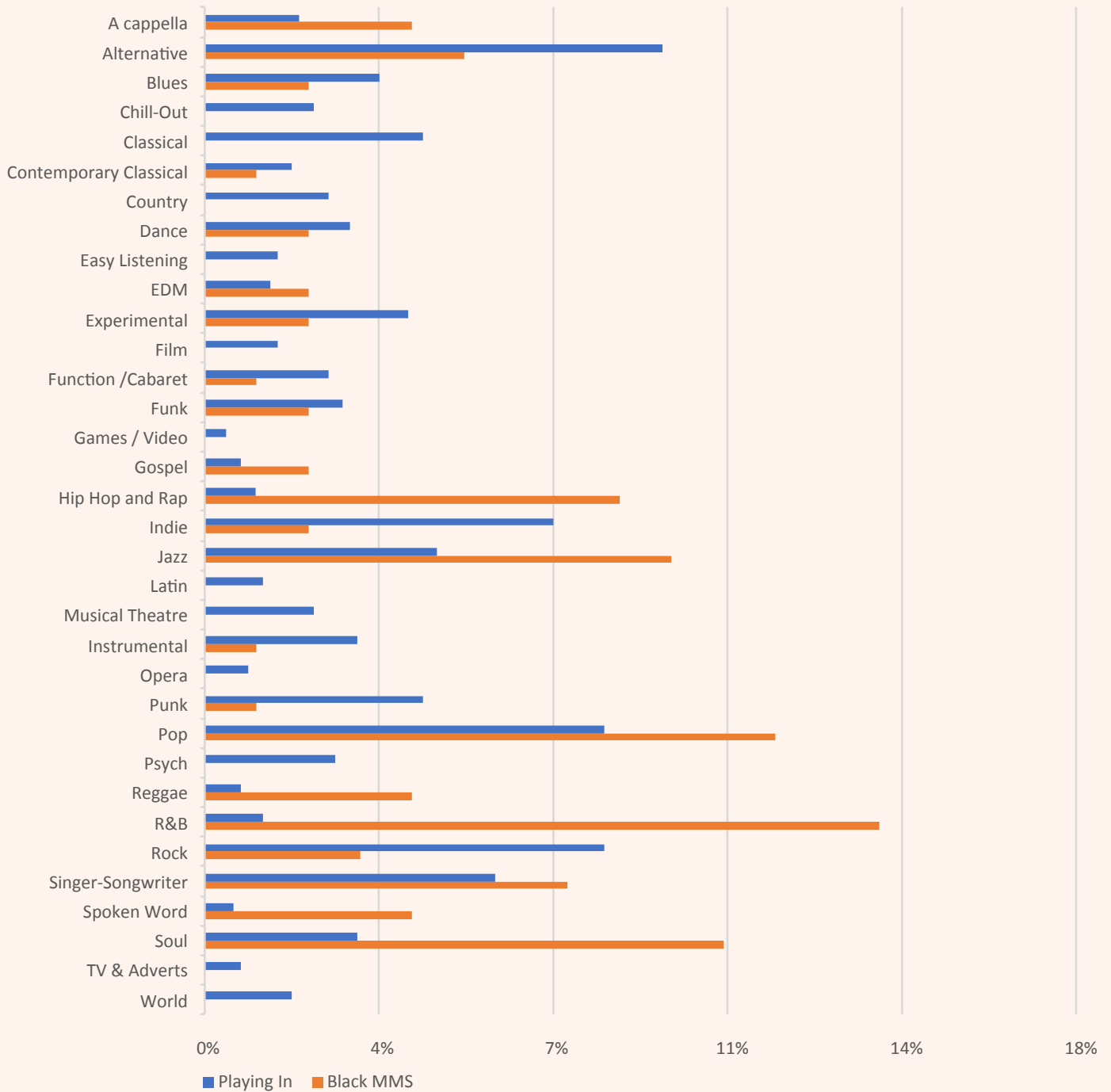
APPENDIX 4

THE REGIONAL MUSIC VENUES MOST ENGAGED WITH BY BLACK LCR MUSICIANS AND PRACTITIONERS

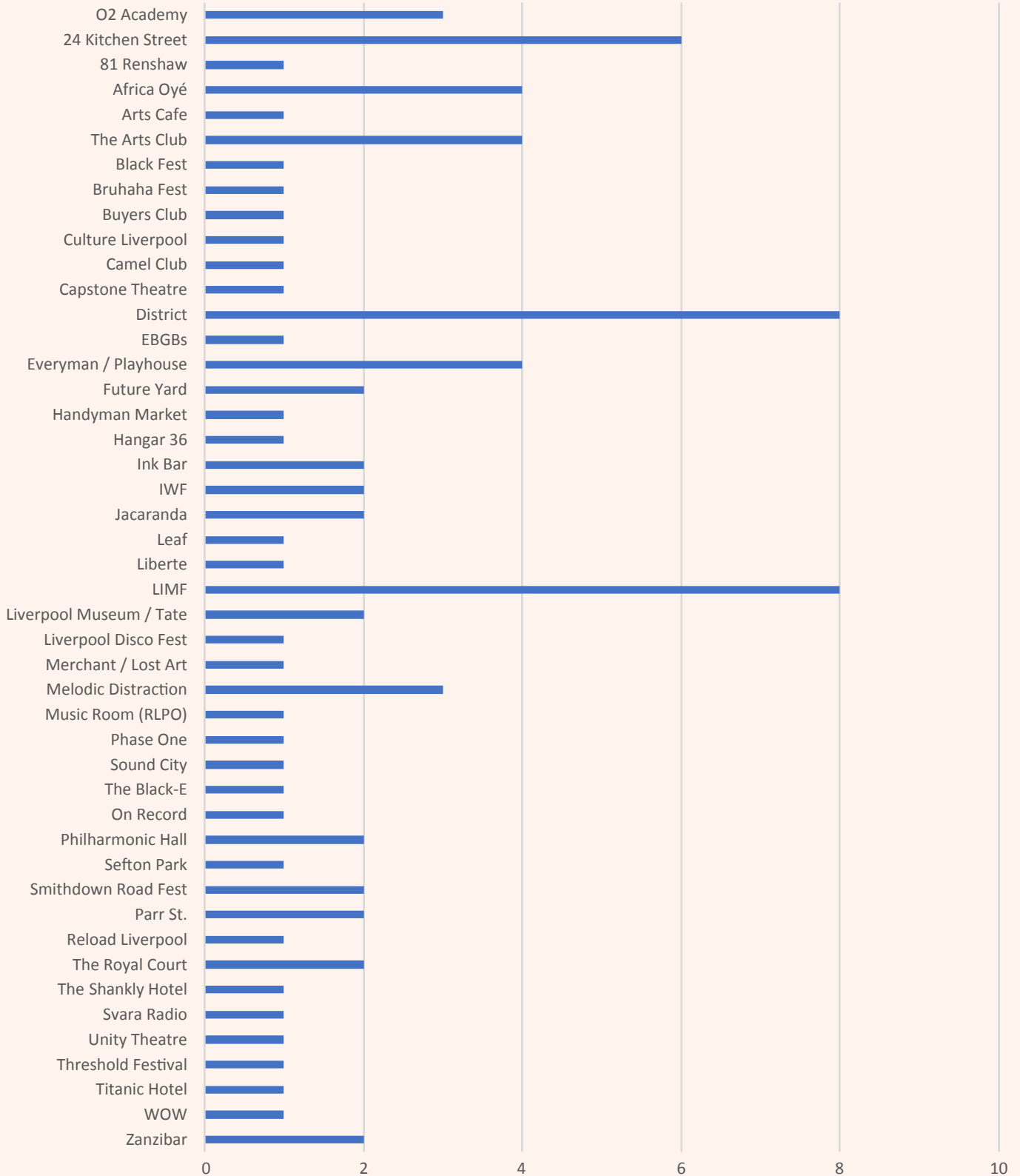| Venue	Count
O2 Academy	3
24 Kitchen Street	6
81 Renshaw	1
Africa Oyé	4
Arts Cafe	1
The Arts Club	4
Black Fest	1
Bruhaha Fest	1
Buyers Club	1
Culture Liverpool	1
Camel Club	1
Capstone Theatre	1
District	8
EBGBs	1
Everyman / Playhouse	4
Future Yard	2
Handyman Market	1
Hangar 36	1
Ink Bar	2
IWF	2
Jacaranda	2
Leaf	1
Liberte	1
LIMF	8
Liverpool Museum / Tate	2
Liverpool Disco Fest	1
Merchant / Lost Art	1
Melodic Distraction	3
Music Room (RLPO)	1
Phase One	1
Sound City	1
The Black-E	1
On Record	1
Philharmonic Hall	2
Sefton Park	1
Smithdown Road Fest	2
Parr St.	2
Reload Liverpool	1
The Royal Court	2
The Shankly Hotel	1
Svara Radio	1
Unity Theatre	1
Threshold Festival	1
Titanic Hotel	1
WOW	1
Zanzibar	2

END NOTES

1 Cities of Music (2023) https://citiesofmusic.net/city/liverpool (accessed 11/07/2023)

2 URBEATZ was an award-winning music and media organisation known throughout the UK for its unique brand of music, film, and media projects.

3 'The Liverpool One Project' (2011) - the largest collaboration of Merseyside based Black Music creators. Those involved were the cream of the crop at the time, including Kof, Esco Williams, Jay Norton, Janiece Myers, Future, Tremz and many more. The project received large fan engagement, national radio play and press coverage and an UMA Award nomination. Themes covered including identity, musical segregation, unity, barriers to success and cultural regeneration.

4 Lashua, B. and Owusu, Y. 2013. Merseybeatz: Hip-hop in Liverpool. In Nitzsche, S. and Grunzweig, W. (eds.), *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, 191-206. Munster: LIT Verlag.

5 Liverpool City Region Music Board https://lcrmusicboard.co.uk/ (accessed 11/07/2023)

6 On Record (2023) (accessed 11/07/2023)

7 Easthope, J. (2020) ON RECORD - UNTOLD STORIES: LISTEN UP https://vimeo.com/473761513

8 Black Music Action Group https://www.lcrmusicboard.co.uk/black-music-action-group (accessed 10/09/2023)

9 John, J. (2021) LCRMB Black Lives Matter Manifesto (p.3) https://lcrmusicboard.co.uk/lcr-music-boards-black-lives-matter-manifesto

10 The project was entitled ReMap as it aimed at remapping the current landscape.

11 Easthope, Jernice, (2021) 'ReMAP Documentary: Liverpool One Project' Vimeo https://vimeo.com/638544959 (accessed 29 July 2023)

12 Flynn, M. and Anderson, R. (2021) Playing In: Exploring the effect of COVID-19 on music makers across the Liverpool City Region. Journal of Music, Health and Wellbeing, Autumn.

13 Gittens, I. Ddungu, R., Stevens, H., Beaumont, C., Wilson, R. (2021) Being Black in the UK Music Industry: Music Creators available at: https://blim.org.uk/report

14 See - Glaser, B. and Strauss, G. ([1967] 2017) Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. London: Routledge and Charmaz, K. and Belgrave, L. L. (2015) Grounded Theory. Edited by Ritzer, G. Blackwell.

15 These comparisons are to provide context and support commentary, as mapping across different independently conducted surveys cannot produce directly comparable data.

16 Citizens Advice (2023) Discrimination because of race: Available at: https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/discrimination/discrimination-because-of-race-religion-or-belief/discrimination-because-of-race/

17 https://www.britannica.com/topic/microaggression

18 BLIM p.15 – for a comprehensive analysis of gender inequality within the Black music community see the BLIM report.

19 See the work of Keychange: a global network and movement working towards a total restructure of the music industry in reaching full gender equality. Available at: https://www.keychange.eu/

20 Median UK wage in August 2022 – Census (2021) available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours

21 Strong, C., Cannizzo, F. and Brunt, S. (2023) 'You are left flailing to try and look after yourself': the music industry still constrains mothers' careers: The Conversation available at: https://theconversation.com/you-are-left-flailing-to-try-and-look-after-yourself-the-music-industry-still-constrains-mothers-careers-210978#:~:text='%20So%20many%20roles%20in%20the,can%20be%20the%20final%20straw

22 Calculated based upon 35-hour week for 52 weeks on living wage rate for 2022-23: see https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

23 Help Musicians and Musicians' Union 2023. Musicians' Census Financial Insight Report 2023. Available at: https://www.helpmusicians.org.uk/about-us/news/the-first-ever-musicians-census-report-launched

24 Help Musicians and Musicians' Union 2023: 17

25 See - Canham, N. (2022). Preparing musicians for precarious work: Transformational approaches to music careers education. New York: Routledge.

26 Help Musicians and Musicians' Union 2023: 13; See also Hesmondhalgh, D., Osborne, R., Sun, H. and Barr, K. (2021). Music creators' earnings in the digital era. Available at: https://cnm.fr/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Music-Creators-Earnings-report.pdf (Accessed: 10/09/2023).

27 UK Music (2022) UK Music Diversity Report 2022: 12. Available at: https://www.ukmusic.org/equality-diversity.

28 Beeching, A. M. (2010). Beyond talent: Creating a successful career in music. New York: Oxford University Press.

29 Help Musicians and Musicians' Union 2023: 17

30 Census (2021) How life has changed in Liverpool, available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E08000012

31 The BLIM data did not divide response by sex.

32 In terms of your experience of racial discrimination, please indicate across the range of contexts listed on the below grid, the forms of racism you have experienced or witnessed within the LCR.

33 Help Musicians and Musicians' Union 2023. Musicians from the Global Majority Insight Report 2023: 24 Available at: https://www.musicianscensus.co.uk

34 Grant, C. (2022) Mabel says social media comments made her want to quit music. Social Media Trolling. Available at: https://discover.hubpages.com/entertainment/Mabel-says-social-media-comments-made-her-want-to-quit-music-Social-Media-Trolling#:~:text=Mabel%20said%3A%20%22I%20remember%20there,I%20putting%20myself%20through%20this%3F

35 UK Music (2022) UK Music Diversity Report 2022: 10.

36 Brown, D. (2023) UK Music: A Manifesto for Music, UK Music. Available at: https://www.ukmusic.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Manifesto-for-Music-2023.pdf

37 See - Hesmondhalgh, D. and Negus, K. (eds.) (2002) Popular music studies. London: Oxford University Press.

38 LCRMB Live Music Venues Map https://www.lcrmusicboard.co.uk/venues-map

39 Strachan, R. (2017) Sonic technologies: Popular music, digital culture and the creative process. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

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41 Morrison, C.D (2023) The process of shifting from one linguistic code (a language or dialect) to another, depending on the social context or conversational setting. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/topic/code-switching

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44 p.41

45 p.52

46 Musicians from the Global Majority Insight Report 2023: p.13

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50 Watson, A. (2022) Building sustainable regional music industry clusters: Post-pandemic recovery and digital opportunities for the UK independent music industry. Available at: https://pec.ac.uk/discussion_paper_/building-sustainable-regional-music-industry-clusters/