

music support

Embargo: 10:00am UK Tuesday 8 October 2024

Music Support announces record number of beneficiaries as it launches new awareness campaign

UK charity helps those who work in the music industry that have experienced challenges around substance use and/or mental health.

Helpline calls up 51% YoY in 2024. New Safe Hub wellbeing survey shows YoY increase in those experiencing drug and/or alcohol problems.

Music Support launches new strategy to meet demand.

New campaign highlights Music Support's work and need for external funding.

LONDON Tuesday 8 October 2024 — Music Support is currently working with a record number of professionals in the music and live industry who have experienced challenges around substance use and/or mental health in 2024.

The UK organisation has shone a light on a worrying increase in those working across the music industry in 2024 with such challenges. The charity has directly impacted at least 1,000 people from the UK music industry in the last year across their core services and seen an increase of 51% in calls and emails to their Helpline.

A newly completed wellbeing survey deployed across the charity's Safe Hubs at festivals this summer, where Music Support gained feedback from both those on stage and behind the scenes, shows an increase across the board in challenges peers face surrounding substance use and mental health. This includes 26% of respondents saying they have experienced drug and/or alcohol problems in the last 12 months (up from 19% in 2023), 49% saying they had experienced mental health problems (up from 40%) and 21% having had suicidal thoughts (up from 18%).

The figures have been revealed ahead of World Mental Health Day, which falls on 10th October.

Music Support is an independent charity with team members who have first-hand experience or are closely connected to the issues addressed by the organisation within its community. It provides services to peers who have experienced challenges around substance use and/or mental health, alongside providing support for their family and friends and the wider music industry. The organisation offers a person-centred, safe space to connect and receive specialist help, confidentially and without judgement.

A new strategy to meet demand

In response to the worrying increase in demand for its essential services over the past year, Music Support is taking decisive action with an ambitious new strategy that will expand and enhance the charity's offering, ensuring comprehensive, targeted support at every stage of an individual's journey in the music industry.

From proactive, educational resources for those just starting out, to life-saving crisis interventions for those facing urgent challenges around substance use and mental health, Music Support's cutting-edge services are designed to meet the specific and evolving needs of the industry. The charity's new strategy will deliver an unparalleled support package, empowering music professionals to thrive, no matter the challenges they face.

Music Support is entirely dependent on external funding to continue its vital work.

A new campaign to raise awareness

With all of this in mind, the charity has launched a new awareness campaign at London's Curzon Soho cinema today, welcoming friends, partners and beneficiaries to the special event.

The campaign is led by a film, made in partnership with The Global Entertainment Marketing Academy of Arts & Sciences (G.E.M.A) and BBC Creative, with voiceover from Busted star Matt Willis - a long-time mental health advocate and supporter of the charity's crucial efforts.

G.E.M.A is the industry body of the marketing and creative community within British broadcast and entertainment providers. Music Support was chosen as the focus of the organisation's 2023 Charity Challenge, which saw marketing teams from across the UK compete for the chance to create a promotional film for Music Support, with BBC Creative ultimately emerging as the winner.

Titled 'Without You, There Is No Music', the film and wider campaign aims to shine a light on the charity's work, raising awareness of the services and resources it provides.

As well as its core services, the charity also provides professional training in Mental Health First Aid and Addiction and Recovery Awareness, as well as hosting webinars and interviews around these important topics.

Music Support has also been providing Safe Hubs backstage at UK festivals since 2016. The Hubs are spaces where anyone working at participating festivals, from artist to crew, can speak to a Mental Health First Aid trained peer.

Music Support CEO, Joe Hastings, said: *"Whilst the increase in demand for our services is a concern, we are also encouraged that stigmas around mental health and problematic substance use are breaking down and people are more willing to reach out for help. We rely on funds to continue our vital work and are incredibly thankful to all those who support us."*

Music Support co-founder, Matt Thomas, said of the new campaign film: *"We were very grateful to be chosen by G.E.M.A as their charity challenge partner and blown away by the quantity and quality of responses to the brief. It has been an amazing experience to work with the fantastic team at BBC Creative to bring their vision to life. 'Without You, There Is No Music' tells the story of how the music industry would not exist without all of the individuals who work tirelessly both on stage and behind the scenes, and so we must look after them. Our small but mighty team is dedicated to championing the wellbeing of our industry peers."*

Matt Willis said of his involvement in the project: *“I was honoured when Music Support asked me to provide the voiceover for this important film. I know all too well the highs and lows of working in the music industry and the ripple effect of poor mental health and addiction on both the affected individual AND their family and friends. From answering crisis Helpline calls to providing essential training to empower individuals to look after the wellbeing of their colleagues (and themselves in the process), the Music Support team are literally saving people’s lives on a daily basis. I’m proud to support them.”*

When referring to the impact the charity has had on their life, a Music Support beneficiary said: *“After promoting and scouting in the industry for many years, it had weathered me and the environment for me became unmanageable. I spoke to Music Support in January 2023 and, since then, they have given me amazing support. I have struggled greatly with cocaine and alcohol in recent years and the advice given and regular phone calls gave me the confidence to go to rehab. I feel the best I have done in years, refreshed and ready to fully immerse myself in music again, but without the devil on my shoulder. I cannot recommend how life affirming and changing this experience has been, and it would not have happened without Music Support.”*

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About Music Support

Music Support is a registered charity founded in April 2016 by people from inside the UK music industry. It provides help and support for those who have experienced challenges around substance use and/or mental health. They are grateful for the support of industry partners, including patron, Robbie Williams. For further information visit www.musicsupport.org. Registered Charity Number: 1170231

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