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## **DRUGS AND THE MUSIC INDUSTRY**

The world is now decades on from the tragic deaths of Janis, Jim and Elvis but nothing has really changed in the music industry. Today we mourn Amy, Michael and Whitney and then there is Kurt in-between. Is the music industry stuck in a groove because it refuses to take responsibility for the recovery of its artists?

Why is it that in four decades, where employment rights have made progressive leaps, the music industry seems to retain some kind of immunity where other industries are being forced to take some responsibility for the impact work has on employee health?

Under the UK's Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 it is the employer's duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. If an employer is aware that an employee is under the influence of excess alcohol or drug-taking and allows them to continue working - placing the employee or others at risk - then he or she could be prosecuted.

According to Alastair Mordey, programme director of The Cabin – a Thailand-based drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre - the excesses of the music industry remain unabated and he sees a large number of patients coming from the music business.

Alastair believes in an ideal world the music industry should be offering Employee Assistance Programmes to aid an employee who is an addict to recover, much like any other industry.

“The music industry might argue that you can't help an addict unless they want to recover. However, for vulnerable, creative artists the huge pressure of endless tours, being taken away from anchors such as home and family and the experience of overnight success can lead even the most stable personalities to temptations most people never encounter.”

Charles Kirby-Welch of UK record company Kartel Creative agrees that global pressures to tour are placing unprecedented demands on artists.

“One of the major problems is that the music business is global and an artist can be high in demand in territories all over the world. The current protocol is still to try and

satisfy this demand with a physical appearance everywhere, which is very demanding to sustain and can cause immense strain on an artist.”

Alastair further adds: “In the Employee Assistance Programme, we advise those responsible on how to conduct brief in-company interventions, when it is prudent to send the employee for psychological assessment, and in serious cases, referral to substance abuse treatment facilities. The Cabin has already seen the success of this programme in businesses across the board and I believe it would have a huge impact on the music industry. It could finally put a stop to the preventable deaths of these great artists.”

### **Notes to Editors**

Alastair Mordey (BA hons, RDAP, ADAP) is the Programme Director and Head Counsellor at The Cabin, an addiction treatment centre in Chiang Mai. He is a certified and accredited addiction counsellor with over 10 years’ experience working in treatment services. Website: [www.thecabinchiangmai.com](http://www.thecabinchiangmai.com).

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