



PRESS RELEASE

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Directors UK Board appoints new Chair and Vice-Chairs

The Directors UK Board has appointed **Karen Kelly** as its new Chair. **James Hawes** and **Anna Thomson** have been appointed Vice-Chairs.

Currently based in Glasgow, **Karen Kelly** is an RTS award-winning freelance director. She began her career at the BBC after graduating from the Royal College of Art Film School. Her production background includes directing and series producing over 50 hours of network television across factual, long form obs docs series, specialist factual films and high-end drama docs as well as feature documentaries. She is currently showrunning a new series for Netflix with Nutopia.

Having previously held a seat on the board of Directors UK, Karen knows firsthand the issues that directors face. With production picking up pace, Karen is keen to see that directors are at the forefront of recovery. As Chair, she will work with the Directors UK team to ensure directors are fairly paid for the use of their works across all platforms. She is committed to ensuring better representation and eradicating bullying and harassment in the industry, driving opportunity for directors living and working in the Nations and Regions, and supporting mid-career directors to maintain sustainable careers.

Karen said: "I'm delighted and honoured to take up the role of Chair of Directors UK. At a time of great change and uncertainty, Directors UK is driving forward an agenda that puts its members' wellbeing and financial security front and centre - it continues to be a leading light in promoting best practice in a world where unconscious bias, bullying and harassment, nepotism and lack of diversity are no longer tolerable. I intend to do my utmost to further the organisation's efforts to protect the value of directors' rights, champion the craft of directing within the industry and promote diversity and inclusion."

James Hawes is returning to the Directors UK Board, which he first joined 20 years ago. James began his career in theatre, then in factual programming at the BBC before moving into drama. His credits include launching family shows like BBC's *Merlin*, Channel 4 period drama *The Mill* and a raft of single films for the BBC which include *The Challenger Disaster* and *Enid*, for which he was BAFTA nominated. He now works internationally, directing for US and global platforms including two films in Netflix's *Black Mirror* series, launching *Snowpiercer* for HBO Max and now directing the launch series of *Slow Horses*, starring Gary Oldman, Jonathan Pryce and Kristin Scott-Thomas for Apple TV+.

James said: "20 years ago I was part of the team that launched Directors UK. I am thrilled to be returning as Vice-Chair to such an established and respected organisation, especially at a moment when our industry is flourishing and UK directors have never been in such demand."

Anna Thomson is a factual director, who has directed more than 30 films including *Long Lost Family: The Unknown Soldier* for ITV, *Portillo's Hidden History of Britain* for Channel 5, *A Great British Air Disaster* for Channel 4, *Portrait Artist of the Year* for Sky Arts, *Al Murray's German Adventure* for BBC, *Patisserie with Michel Roux* for BBC, *World War 2: The Last Heroes* for Channel 4, and *Objects of Desire* for Sky Arts.

Anna said: "I'm absolutely delighted and honoured to continue serving on the board as Vice-Chair. I'm looking forward to working with my fellow board members to promote the rights and protect the welfare of directors across our industry."

Speaking of the appointments, Directors UK CEO **Andy Harrower** said: *"I'm excited to be working with new Directors UK Chair Karen Kelly, who will be supported by Vice-Chairs Anna Thomson and James Hawes and our talented TV and film directors on the Directors UK Board. A big thank you to our previous Chair and Vice-Chairs Steve Smith, Susanna White and Bill Anderson who have done so much to champion the rights of screen directors during their time on the board - we look forward to continuing their hard work."*



Also on the Board are **Abigail Dankwa**, **Avril Evans**, **Zoe Hines**, **Jessica Hobbs**, **Alex Kalymnios**, **Tinge Krishnan**, **Lisi Russell** and **Carolyn Saunders**.

Alongside these working directors, **Andy Harrower**, Directors UK Finance Director **Guy Gibbons**, and non-executive director **Deborah Stones** also sit on the board.

-ENDS-

Our board members are available for industry comment and insight.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with Charlie at Directors UK to arrange comment or interviews:

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Notes to Editors

About Directors UK

Directors UK is the professional association of UK screen directors. It is a membership organisation representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 7,800 members – the majority of working TV and film directors in the UK. Directors UK negotiates rights deals and collects and distributes royalties to its members. It also campaigns and lobbies on its members' behalf and provides a range of services including legal advice, events and career development. Directors UK works closely with fellow organisations around the world to represent directors' rights and concerns, promotes excellence in the craft of direction and champions change to the current landscape to create an equal opportunity industry for all.