

Keith Skeoch appointed as Chair of Edinburgh International Festival board



MEDIA IMAGES AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

23 April, Edinburgh: **Edinburgh International Festival**, the world's leading performing arts festival, today announces the appointment of **Keith Skeoch** as Chair of the International Festival board, due to commence in June 2021. Keith's appointment was unanimously approved by the Board, where he already serves as a Trustee and active member of the Festival's Diversity & Inclusion Board Working Group.

Former Chief Executive of Standard Life Investments Plc, Keith is a highly respected industry leader with deep expertise in the financial sector, public policy, regulatory affairs, and purpose led organisational change.

Keith is currently Chair of the Aberdeen Standard Investments Research Institute, Chair of the ring-fencing and proprietary trading independent review panel, Interim Chair of the Financial Reporting Council, Chair of the Investment Association and a member of the UK Takeover Panel. He is also a Trustee of the Standard Life Foundation.

Leonie Bell, Chair of the Nominations Committee says:

"Keith's passion for and understanding of the festival spirit, its rich history and its role in Edinburgh and Scotland's recovery is unrivalled. His experience in leadership and navigating organisational transformation is matched with a deep understanding of the significance of the current moment, and what lies ahead, for the Festival, society and the arts at large. He steps up to lead an ambitious and diverse Board that is enormously invested in the Festival's local relevance, national role and international success."

Keith succeeds **Professor Niall Lothian OBE**, who first joined the Board in 2011 after which he was elected Deputy Chair in 2014 and Chair from 2017.

Niall says: *“It has been an honour to serve on and then lead the International Festival’s Board of Trustees over the last ten years. We have seen the Festival through significant change and challenge including the transformation of the board and of course, the recent pandemic. I am pleased to hand over the role of Chair to the capable hands of Keith Skeoch, with the organisation in good stead and with a Festival in August to look forward to.”*

Keith is a hugely committed supporter of the arts, with an understanding of the transformative role they have across society and individual lives. He is also invested in diversity and inclusion, mentoring female, and minority ethnic executive leaders to support their development across different sectors.

Keith says: *“I’m delighted to be appointed as Chair of the Edinburgh International Festival. It is an honour to lead such a capable Board and a talented organisation through a period of significant change as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic. I have been connected to the Festival both personally and professionally for many years. The next few years will offer a much-needed opportunity for us to strengthen the role that the Festival plays both within the international and local arts community as we recover from the pandemic.”*

– ENDS –

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For media images – see [here](#)

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Edinburgh International Festival

Edinburgh International Festival is the world’s leading performing arts festival, featuring the finest performers from the worlds of dance, opera, music and theatre. Created in 1947 to celebrate the human spirit, the International Festival normally serves as an annual cultural exchange, every August, for an international audience exceeding 400,000 per year.

The 2020 Edinburgh International Festival was cancelled for the first time in its history due to concerns around the Covid-19 pandemic, but remains actively engaged in Edinburgh’s community and in creating cultural content for both Scotland’s capital city and the world.

Keith Skeoch Biography

Keith Skeoch is currently Chair of the Aberdeen Standard Investments Research Institute, Chair of the ring-fencing and proprietary trading independent review panel, Interim Chair of the Financial Reporting Council, Chair of the Investment Association and a member of the UK Takeover Panel. He is also a Trustee of the Standard Life Foundation.

Keith joined Standard Life Investments (SLI) in 1999 as Chief Investment Officer and was appointed Chief Executive of that division in 2004 and to the main board of Standard Life plc following demutualisation in 2006. Keith led the exponential growth of SLI in terms of assets under management, geographic footprint, revenue stream, organisational capability and brand strength. He was appointed CEO of Standard Life plc in 2015 and then as CEO of Standard Life Aberdeen (SLA) having led the separation of the life business to Phoenix in 2018 and the subsequent formation of a global, focussed and capital light investment house. Keith stepped down as CEO of SLA in September 2020.

As part of his long-term commitment to diversity he also mentors female and minority ethnic executive leaders to help them chart their course to a C suite role. Current mentees are executives in the media, food and drink sectors as well as finance. He also serves as a trustee on the Standard Life Foundation, an independent charity funded from unclaimed shares post demutualisation. The charity funds research into financial well-being and inclusion and Keith sits on its Grants Committee as well as the main board.

The International Festival Board

For further information and biographies – see [here](#)

Professor Niall Lothian OBE (Chair)

Keith Skeoch (Chair Designate)

Lara Akeju

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