

Dr Colette Backwell

Non-Executive Board Member



With a PhD in Biochemistry, Colette started her career as a research scientist, moving into the development of science policy and evidence-based policy making as a senior civil servant in the UK and Scottish Governments. Moving into the private sector, Colette was the Scotland Director of the Food and Drink Federation, a trade body representing the UK food and drink manufacturing sector, before moving into the charitable business sector as Chief Executive of Clan Cancer Support, the largest, independent cancer charity in the north-east of Scotland. As CEO for 7 years she provided strategic direction and leadership to all aspects of the business, including during the Covid-19 pandemic, acquiring a detailed knowledge of charity governance and health and social care in Scotland. She was the third sector representative on the NHS North Cancer Alliance; a member of the NHS Grampian Cancer Strategy Group; and Chair of the NHS Grampian Cancer Partnership Group for 6 years, during which time she led the development of the Cancer Support North Scotland website in partnership with other cancer charities in the region. Since 2023 she has been a strategic advisor to the NHS Grampian Charity.

Colette served as a Trustee of the University of Aberdeen from 2019-2023, latterly serving as Senior Independent Member, and President of the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce from 2019-2021. In these roles she gained extensive experience as Chair of the Board and membership of committees such as Governance and Nominations;

Remuneration; and Finance and Audit. She has considerable expertise in negotiation and influencing of complex stakeholder groups, acquired across the public, private, and charitable sectors. She has been a mentor to many early-stage young professionals, helping them development higher self-awareness and confidence as they develop their careers. She was honoured to be appointed as a Burgess of the City of Aberdeen in 2017.