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Mr Paul Martin MSP
Convener
Public Audit Committee
Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
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27 August 2015

Dear Convener

SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES 2015

The Public Audit Committee considered my report *Scotland's Colleges 2015* at its meeting on 29 April 2015. We offered to provide additional information on compulsory redundancies within the sector to the Committee.

The Committee requested a breakdown of the number of staff and senior staff who left the college sector as a result of compulsory redundancies and details of the cost of this. This information is not published consistently within colleges' audited accounts but I requested this information from auditors for the purposes of my report.

Auditors reported that a total of 30 staff left the sector as a result of compulsory redundancies between 2011-12 and 2013-14 at a total cost of £95,000.

Compulsory redundancies were identified at two colleges:

North Highland College: 23 members of staff left the college through compulsory redundancies at a total cost of £45,000 between 2011-12 and 2013-14. Staffing levels are reviewed as part of the college's annual budgeting process and posts are reduced where necessary, for example, where there has been a loss of funding for particular courses. The college did not offer a voluntary severance scheme over the period.

Fife College: In 2012-13, the year that Adam Smith College, Carnegie College and non-land based courses at Elmwood College were merged to form Fife College, there were some compulsory redundancies in addition to voluntary severances. In total, seven members of staff left through compulsory redundancies at a cost of £50,000.

Severance payments are an issue of public interest and I will provide an update on the number and cost of these payments in my report next year on Scotland's colleges.

I hope the Committee finds this information useful.

Yours sincerely



Caroline Gardner
Auditor General for Scotland