

## **Colleges Scotland Comment on Audit Scotland ‘Scotland’s Colleges 2015’ Report**

A spokesperson for Colleges Scotland said:

### **General comment:**

“The Audit Scotland report recognises the significant change that the college sector has had to negotiate in the past few years. It underlines that colleges in Scotland have succeeded in delivering what has been asked of them on time, whilst maintaining sound finances, and protecting the learner.

“It is our understanding that no other sector has been re-classified from private to public sector – it has been unique for the college sector, and therefore there has been no precedent.”

### **On staff severance payments:**

“The report states that there were weaknesses in how a small number of colleges processed senior staff severance payments. It is important to stress that the decisions that were taken on severance issues were made by some pre-merger colleges, and not by existing colleges. The new guidelines and governance arrangements that are now in place provide a more robust system which should ensure that a similar situation does not arise in the future.”

### **On governance arrangements:**

“The report acknowledges that governance arrangements within colleges are complex. Following the significant change, Colleges Scotland considers that the new arrangements should be allowed to settle, and no further change is needed at this time.”

### **The changing education agenda:**

“One of the main changes the college sector is facing is that the education agenda has moved to a focus on the government’s Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) – Scotland’s Youth Employment Strategy, which has consequences for the number of adult learners accessing colleges to retrain and upskill. This also has a knock-on impact on the work to establish gender balance, as women predominantly study on a part-time basis.

“Colleges in Scotland support social inclusion and widening access which will benefit the wider economy. Therefore the college sector not only supports the DYW strategy, but is committed to upskilling and retraining adult learners.”

**ENDS**

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