

University of Aberdeen

Report for RISC

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The conclusion of the Voluntary Severance / Early Retirement scheme reveals that the original prediction of 150 posts equating to £10.5M recurrent savings has not been achieved with almost 170 posts lost garnering savings of £7.1M.

Many of the posts which have been lost lie in the support services of the institution and as such any posts which are support but not technical have been tied to a review of Professional Services which is ongoing. This review seeks to save £1M in 2015/16 and through implementation of further recommendations a further saving of £2M in 16/17. To date, due to Unite and UNISON pushing for support staff VS/ER figures to be included in the review the saving for 15/16 is £1.5M. The review would appear to be showing that the institution will be centralising many of the support services which it had de-centralised when the College structure was first introduced (taking us back to almost a Faculty / Department scenario), the Colleges as they currently exist will be massively reduced, existing mainly in name and with 3 or 4 personnel in each, staff currently seen as excess will be expected to fit into whatever new centralised structures are recommended by the review.

Due to the shortfall, UCU via ACAS have agreed with management that pending the outcome of the SFC funding there may be a further 4-6 week VS/ER scheme targeted at Academic staff in the (management quote) “two or three areas which continue to show a financial challenge”. Unite UoA Group have questioned the difference between targeted VS and Compulsory Redundancy and whilst not completely happy with the answer, are sympathetic to this being a “last roll of the dice” for staff in the areas affected.

The university is about to engage on a new Health, Safety and Wellbeing campaign called “Because We Care”, morale will have to be improved massively for this to be taken seriously, particularly as it contains policy to promote holding onto handrails at all times in stairwells and banning the use of hands free telephony whilst driving on university business, this is still being negotiated, we are yet to learn how the institution wishes to police such policies.