

PE2103/C: Legislate to standardise the prescribed learning hours for Primary and Secondary schools in Scotland

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills written submission, 10 January 2025

I write with regard to your letter of 18 October on behalf of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee where you asked for an update on the Scottish Government's work with local authorities to reach an agreement on the provision of learning hours in Scottish schools and when the analysis of the consultation - *Prescribing the minimum annual number of learning hours: consultation* would be published.

I explained in my response, dated 25 November 2024, that discussion with local government were continuing and that a consultation analysis report would be published in due course.

You will be aware that we announced on 10 December 2024 an agreement between the Scottish Government and local government, via its representative body COSLA - [Education: agreement with COSLA - gov.scot](#).

We have committed to working together to restore teacher numbers to 2023 levels next year, and freeze learning hours which will support the learning experience for pupils across Scotland. In addition, we have also agreed to make meaningful progress towards reducing class contact time for teachers, in recognition of the asks made by teachers and teaching unions. Falkirk Council also agreed on 12 December to withdraw their proposals to reduce learning hours in schools in their area for the 25/26 financial year.

I am sure you will agree this joint agreement with local government is welcome. It will give parents across Scotland reassurance that their children's education will not be damaged by a reduction in learning hours.

I would also like to make you aware that Scottish Ministers have also agreed with local government to work together on proposals to establish a statutory minimum number of learning hours, to understand the definition of a "learning hour", and the impact of this ambition on Councils currently providing a lower number of learning hours.

I am also pleased to advise that the analysis report for the consultation *Prescribing the minimum annual number of learning hours: consultation* has now been published and is available here – <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781835216088>.

I hope this update is helpful.

JENNY GILRUTH