



CLD Standards Council Scotland

Submitted Response
to the
Scottish Government Consultation Online Survey

Prescribing Minimum Annual Number of Learning Hours

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Online Survey Questions and Responses

1: Should the Scottish Government set in law the minimum learning hours pupils in Scotland should receive?

From the CLD Standards Council members responses:

- **77.5% Yes**
- **22.5% No**

2: Do you agree that the minimum annual learning hours should be 950 hours for primary schools?

From the CLD Standards Council members responses:

- **55% Yes**
- **22.5% No**
- **22.5% Maybe**

3: Do you agree that the minimum annual learning hours should be 1045 hours for secondary schools?

From the CLD Standards Council members responses:

- **44.5% Yes**
- **22.5% No**
- **33% Maybe**

4: Do you agree with the suggested definition of learning hours set out at paragraph 2.1 in the consultation paper?

From the CLD Standards Council members responses:

- **55% Yes**

No comments

- **22.5% No**

Concerns were made about recognition of the learning that takes place outside traditional teaching periods in the school day, and how these would not counted or included, and therefore devalued.

This would also take away the importance of the informal learning that happens within breaks and lunch, as well as miss the social and emotional support that young people often need and access throughout the day, evenings and even non weekends which is linked to their wellbeing, their learning and ability to engage with school and learning.

The statement regarding annual hours does not recognise that many young people engage with Community Learning and Development (CLD) workers to access learning opportunities out with school or the traditional curriculum during school hours. This may be because schools is not accessible for them due to health, poverty, transport, carer duties etc. These young people often are working towards SQA qualifications and other recognised awards which are more suitable to their needs at that time.

It was suggested that as this statement does not recognise wider achievement and the alternative learning pathways that young people access as mentioned, therefore it may support cuts in funding to support these alternative programmes and that could go against Article 28 of the UNCRC, which says that children and young people have the right to education no matter

who they are: regardless of race, gender or disability; if they're in detention, or if they're a refugee.

Members felt that as this statement suggests no learning takes place out with the classroom or school hours then this goes against the holistic approach that is needed to ensure GIRFEC and SHANARRI.

- 22.5% Maybe

Reasons given for this response were based around concerns that the statement seems to be based on verifiable facts, it is limiting regards its recognition of what learning hours can be. There was also concerns that interpretation of this statement will vary across local authorities and therefore unfair and difficult to support or measure.

5: Apart from the exemptions outlined in this paper are there any other circumstances where a variation to the number of learning hours provided may be needed?

We need a shift of culture away from the traditional thought process that all learning takes place in schools with teachers, and enable recognition of alternative learning opportunities with other professional educators such as CLD workers. This would offer and provide a wealth of learning such as DofE, DYA, John Muir, saltire, MH&W (awards) as well as opportunities for community activity, team building, personal development and supporting the growth and development of meta skills that all young people require (as well as academic achievements) to become confident communicators, understand collaboration, develop critical thinking, and experience creativity. The definition of 'teaching time' needs to be much more flexible and could be replaced, for instance, by 'time spent undertaking structured learning opportunities'.

Example: <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/future-fridays-its-yours-make>

It was suggested that there is an urgent and critical need to continue and improve working with Scottish Education/Ministers, and others, to support their understanding of a more universal approach to education. This is vital to support the culture change required within Scottish Education. Learning doesn't just happen with a teacher and it's important that policy makers and those with budget powers nationally and regionally understand CLD as a whole (CLD youth work, ESOL, family learning, community development etc) as well as the other third sector educational support services who have a role to play in learning and GIRFEC.

When you have a young person with special educational needs there is work done to pull together a package that meets their needs - the same should be happening for those who can't/don't fall neatly into a 9 - 3 classroom learning situation. All aspects of learning (planned and recorded) should be able to be counted in a young person's educational journey.

"Learning Hours" needs to include hours spent on activities related to achievement of awards, but also give recognition of other children and family learning and development that the young person requires to realise and release potential. This can be in agreement with schools but happen whenever and where ever is right for the child and the learning. This could also include uniformed activities such as guides, scouts, air cadets etc.

Recognition is required regarding the fact that CLD already work well in partnership with many primary and secondary schools but this can vary between schools and regions. It needs to become a more formal agreement between CLD and the education departments in all local authorities. CLD offer the opportunity for young people (and learners of all ages) to engage in their communities, to access intergenerational learning experiences, learn leadership and

working with others to partake in workshops, focus groups and imaginative groupwork outside of school and classrooms. For a number of young people who find school a challenging place to be, this enables them to gain the critical skills and engage in positive learning experiences to ensure they develop personally regarding self-esteem, belief and confidence in their potential.

6: Are there any further views you wish to share regarding this proposal?

There are currently 3 exemptions where education authorities may allow fewer than the minimum hours prescribed. Those circumstances are: where the pupil's wellbeing would be adversely affected; where matters out with the authority's control make it impracticable to make the prescribed hours available; and where other circumstances that Ministers may prescribe by regulations apply.

CLD Standards Council members wanted to highlight these additional circumstances where a variation to the number of learning hours provided may be needed.

It was felt that secondary schools need to put on better provision for secondary school children at the end of terms. Will young people attending school to watch videos or sit in a classroom doing nothing count as learning hours?

What happens regarding teacher strikes, when children have access to their learning taken away from them or alternative models that they cannot access or are unfamiliar with?

During covid online learning was made widely accessible and CLD saw a number of young people who previously could not access school (due to reasons such as health, poverty etc as mentioned previously) suddenly having a wealth of across curriculum learning, along with support learning such as bitesize etc which they had not had access to before. Why has this now stopped and these young people left isolated again? This method of accessing learning (hours) should still be a mainstream option (not regarded as alternative) and could be supported by CLD and other professional workers to offer positive engagement and valuable progression routes for each young person. They could go to a community centre or CLD base to get support in their communities if they cannot go into school during 9 to 3. This could all be included in their hours.

Consideration should be given to where pupils studying flexibly will allow greater options, such as studying through Esgoil in an area that doesn't offer Gaelic National qualifications. Or where flexibility would allow pupils to engage in religious or cultural practices more easily such as EID or Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, or participate in other types of learning that would help them in their non-academic development.

Additional concerns and information given by CLD Standards Council members were:

If young people are forced to attend and be in school to access countable hours then they will be unable to access their chosen CLD provision and gain alternative accreditation which would enable them to learn and grow. Potentially this could be quite negative. The prescribed hours are higher than the OECD averages and there is little evidence that increasing the quantity of teaching will have a positive effect of the quality of learning

Currently CLD learning programmes and opportunities can be any day and during evening as well as school hours, this measurement of learning hours being offered may have a negative impact on CLD partnership working with schools if alternative learning for young people and their families has to happen during school times or on school premises.

Schools should be developing their curriculum in partnership with CLD and not using CLD after the fact (as often happens). There should be communication, nationally with employers to support parents work patterns and universities to ensure we are not overloading teenagers to meet higher qualifications with less classroom time.

CLD can often be used to “babysit” young people in school hours and times, rather than understand what the CLD sector can deliver and enable them to engage meaningfully, offering valuable learning at alternative times and locations which are suitable to the young persons needs.

If handled properly and CLD/non-academic provision better recognised and given parity of esteem with other teaching professions, it would be respected equally within academic development, only benefitting the young person.

Families are already struggling with cost of living and we are seeing the continued growth of working poverty. There is a concern that this proposal may follow the English model and enable fining of parents for non-attendance of such rigid requirement of hours. It was thought that this could push some families further into poverty or put some young people into more harm where school is their safe place. For working families this will cause immediate concern over childcare and provision, and put further strain on CLD and the third sector to 'plug the gap'. Longer term it could see a widening of the poverty gap as those families with resources to support non-classroom time can offer additional life enriching opportunities and those without those resources will be left behind. This would negatively impact mental health and wellbeing of young people and families, with poor communities being harder hit and less informal and alternative opportunities for those already disadvantaged.

There are currently local variations to any legislation linked to non-attendance at schools across Scotland. Concerns were raised regarding this will be the same so perhaps little or no impact for a lot of cost and distress. Further legislation without young people and their families fully understanding any benefit could lead to further disengagement. Will there be positive, educative and supportive structures in place to offer learning and guidance to those families and young people who may not value school education and choose to not attend?

The CLD sector, who are already connected within vulnerable communities and families should be used to engage families and communities to assist with the roll out and learning around this legislation if it goes ahead. Young people should be supported to be engaged in this discussion and how it could affect them. Clear, plain English, written materials both paper based and online would be required. CLD could facilitate workshops/discussions to develop, test and confirm understanding, explore implications and ensure understanding around the impact this will have on them if their children are consistent non-attenders. More time is needed to consult with young people and families regards this legislation.