

**PE1759/D**

Orkney Islands Council submission of 24 September 2020

Thank you for your letter of 10 September 2020 and the opportunity to comment on this matter.

In Orkney we have looked at our school day arrangements a number of times over a number of years. It is some considerable time however since an offer of less than 25 hours was made to children in the early years of primary education.

Building on the experience of those children in our early learning and childcare settings, moving, at the point of transition, to a 25-hour school week has been our starting point since 2005.

From time to time we do audit the number of taught hours each school offers and, if necessary, work with the head teacher and staff to optimise a (primary) offer built on a 25-hour learning week model.

I would however endorse the views set out by COSLA (submission of 20 December 2019) in so far as there needs to be local flexibility. In our island community this includes varying the length of the day (longer or shorter) to accommodate travel on and off the outer isles - for example to join with other children from other schools in curriculum enriching shared activities.

I do not believe that the length of the school day needs to be legislated for. The expectation of what constitutes a 'normal' week (25 hours primary or 27.5 hours secondary) is clear enough. Any variation should be compelling and designed to optimise the overall offer. In this way, head teachers and staff can be supported to deliver a range of activity (the curriculum) that delivers on the outcomes that we wish to see achieved.