

Only 16% of school food is sourced in Scotland

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Schools north of the border source less than a fifth of school food from Scotland, according to new figures.

Ahead of the Scottish Parliament debate on 'physical activity, diet and healthy weight', the Scottish Conservatives have revealed a freedom of information response showing that Scotland Excel, the shared national procurement service, spends just 16 percent of its budget for school food on food sourced in Scotland.

A further 15 per cent of school food is sourced elsewhere, and is then manufactured here.

Scotland Excel spends £42.5 million on school food on behalf of councils, meaning that it spends £6.7 million on school food from Scotland, and £6.4 million on school food that is manufactured in Scotland.

While not all school food is purchased through Scotland Excel, 28 of the 32 local authorities do use the procurement service.

The Scottish Conservatives have said that this needs to change, to support children's health and wellbeing, to support food producers and to reduce food miles.

Brian Whittle, Scottish Conservative spokesman for sport and wellbeing said:

"We ask our farmers to produce the highest quality produce; we charge them with custodianship of the countryside; with paying the living wage and with the highest standards of animal welfare.

"Yet when it comes to public food procurement it is clear that our farmers are not being supported in the way that they should.

"These figures show that a substantial amount of school food is still travelling thousands of food miles before reaching a child's plate.

"One of the key elements in tackling health inequalities and the stubborn attainment gap surely should be ensuring the high quality food produced right here in Scotland makes its way to the Scottish Schools' dining halls.

“That is evidently not the norm and needs to change, to support our children’s health and wellbeing, to support our food producers and to cut back on an unnecessary carbon footprint”.