



Mr John Swinney MSP  
Deputy First Minister & Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

8<sup>th</sup> November, 2019

Dear Deputy First Minister

**Tayside Central Production Unit**

Thank you for your support for GMB Scotland's campaign to keep school kitchens open in Perth & Kinross. As Britain's biggest union for school support staff, GMB have campaigned consistently for healthy and nutritious school meals, for free school meals and for meals made freshly in school by our dedicated school catering members.

I have no doubt that you will have been pleased by the decision of Perth & Kinross Council to opt out of the proposed Tayside Central Production Unit meaning that the children of your constituents in North Perthshire will not be served meals which have been frozen, transported to school and then reheated. Earlier this year you told the Scottish Parliament that you had specific concerns about the Tayside Central Production Unit plan because you thought that it would "undermine the quality of produce that is able to be delivered in individual schools" and that it would "affect employment and sustainability in a number of localities".

On both points, GMB Scotland and our members employed in school kitchens right across Tayside could not agree more.

You went on to urge your own local authority to reflect carefully because you had "no sufficient confidence in the arrangements that have been set out to justify the changes that are being made".

It is good news that Perthshire children will continue to receive fresh meals, but why is right that kids in Dundee and in Angus will have to accept frozen meals?

Given your local interest in this, but also your national responsibility, I hope that you will intervene with your SNP colleagues in Dundee City Council and with the administration in Angus to make the same points that you made for the children of your own constituents. Local decision making is, of course, important but the Scottish Government has been quite clear that it wants to see the quality of healthy school meals rise. To be frank, it is not possible to square your comments about why this isn't good enough for Perth and Kinross with it being okay for Dundee and Angus.



I look forward to hearing from you and I hope that through your efforts all of Scotland's children can have access to good quality, and freshly cooked, school meals.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Drew Duffy'.

**Drew Duffy**  
**Senior Organiser for Public Services**