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Schools which are only a few miles apart are offering pupils a vastly different number of subjects to study, new research has found.

Figures have revealed that in some local authorities there is a significant difference between the school offering the greatest number of Higher subjects to pupils and the school offering the least.

For example, in Edinburgh, the gap between schools with the most and the least subjects on offer is 21, while in the Highlands it's as high as 24.

And in Glasgow, schools that are relatively close together vary from 13 subjects on offer up to 27.

The statistics were obtained through Freedom of Information by the Scottish Conservatives, who said teacher shortages in some areas were likely to have a direct impact on the subjects on offer.

The figures come as some councils become increasingly concerned about their inability to fill vacant posts, and as fears grow about the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

“There will always be some very understandable variation in subject choice across different schools of rural and urban differences, depending on the size of school and different pupil cohorts.

“But parents will be alarmed to see the extent of the variation in some local authorities, particularly between similar types of schools.

“They will be even more concerned when they learn that there is some correlation between lower choice options and those local authorities experiencing higher teacher shortages.

“Subject choice is clearly critical when it comes to SQA qualifications and entry to college, university and the workplace.

“It's therefore a very important part of any pupil's education.

"This has always been a problem, but it's being exacerbated as a result of problems with teacher recruitment.

"John Swinney knows only too well a few schools in his own Perthshire constituency have had real problems with recruiting teachers, including in key subjects like maths.

"That is completely unacceptable. The SNP must address this issue head on before more young people are adversely affected."

Notes to editors:

Below is the variation between the most and the least Higher subjects offered by schools in each local authority. Those councils not included either didn't hold the information, or refused to respond:

Aberdeen – 13

Aberdeenshire – 11

Angus – 7

Argyll and Bute – 15

Clackmannanshire – 4

Dumfries and Galloway – 11

Dundee – 16

East Ayrshire – 6

East Dunbartonshire – 8

East Lothian – 5

Edinburgh – 21

Eilean Siar – 12

Falkirk – 9

Glasgow – 14

Highland – 24

Inverclyde – 7

Midlothian – 7

Moray – 9

North Ayrshire – 7

Perth and Kinross – 15

Renfrewshire – 8

Scottish Borders – 12

Shetland – 1

South Ayrshire – 8

South Lanarkshire – 6

Stirling – 5

West Dunbartonshire – 3

West Lothian – 10

A school-by-school breakdown is available here:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Highers.xlsx>

For individual FoI responses, contact the Scottish Conservative press office.