

20 January 2020

To: Chief Executives of County Councils and Metropolitan Districts and Unitary Authorities in England;
Chief Executives of London Boroughs;
Chief Executives of County Councils and County Borough Councils in Wales;
Directors of Children's Services/Directors of Education of County Councils Metropolitan Districts and Unitary Authorities in England;
Directors of Children's Services/Directors of Education of London Boroughs;
Directors of Children's Services/Directors of Education of County Councils and County Borough Councils in Wales;
Members of the Soulbury Committee
Subscribers

Dear Sir/Madam

JOINT EDUCATION SERVICES CIRCULAR NO 215

LOCAL AUTHORITIES' CAR USER SCHEMES AND WORK-RELATED STRESS

The Soulbury Committee has agreed to remind local authorities that Soulbury-paid officers might be specifically or disproportionately affected by changes to car user schemes (Appendix I of the Soulbury Report).

In particular, the NJC Local Government Services car user scheme and most authority schemes distinguish between essential and casual user status. The NJC scheme defines essential users as those employees "whose duties are of such a nature that it is essential for them to have a motor car at their disposal whenever required". The Soulbury Committee reminds local authorities, when considering whether to retain a category of essential user or considering the definition of the category, to give appropriate consideration to the position of Soulbury-paid officers and include them in any consultations.

Many Soulbury-paid officers may find it difficult to undertake their duties without the use of a car. In rural areas, particularly, the long distances travelled between schools and settings and very limited access to public transport during an average working day may mean that access to a car is essential for efficient use of officers' time. In urban areas, many officers (in particular female officers) may need a car for their own personal safety due to the time or location of work engagements. In all areas, the weight and volume of resources which many officers are required to transport with them in order to complete their everyday duties may mean that reliance on public transport is impracticable and, therefore, car use is essential.

The Soulbury Committee has also agreed to remind local authorities that Appendix G of the Soulbury Report drew the attention of authorities to guidance documents that offered appropriate advice and guidance to employers on work-related stress. Employers have a duty to make sure that their employees do not suffer stress-related illness as a result of the nature and amount of work.

Yours sincerely



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