

The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
His Majesty's Treasury
Sent by email

Wednesday, 19 July 2023

Dear Chancellor,

Mileage Allowance Rate

We write to draw your attention to [e-petition 600966](#), relating to the Approved Mileage Allowance Payment rate. The petition was considered in Westminster Hall on Monday 3 July 2023, where MPs agreed that the approved mileage allowance rate should be increased. A transcript of the debate is available [here](#).

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) represents over 22,000 social workers across the UK. Our members have told us that the current mileage rate is proving inadequate to cover the travel expenditure necessary for them to carry out their role effectively. For those travelling long distances in rural areas, the pressure is even more acutely felt. I'm sure you agree that this is neither fair nor sustainable.

National and local government depend upon social workers to use their cars to carry out assessments and provide essential support to individuals and families. As you are aware, social workers have statutory responsibilities including the protection of children, and travelling to carry out visits to the child's home is imperative to fulfilling these responsibilities. On many occasions social workers also need to escort and transport children, young people, adults and family members/carers they work to attend meetings, reviews and to access care and support services. Sometimes this needs to happen urgently.

Most local authorities in England and Scotland allow social workers to claim back 45p per mile. Historically the non-taxable mileage rate has been linked to or used as the amount employers pay as their mileage rate. As the e-petition rightly highlights, the non-taxable allowance is unchanged since 2011. Likewise, despite the cost of fuel increasing by 20% over the last five years alone, social work employers have not increased their mileage payments. Increasing the non-taxable allowance would signal that Government recognises how vital the work of those who need to use their cars is.

Since 2010-11 social workers have also faced what many are calling a 'lost decade' for pay growth in the UK labour market, with social worker pay growth sitting at just

4.1% versus the 15% seen by the typical worker over the same period. This stagnation means that social workers will have felt the increase to the cost of living and the mileage freeze more than most workers.

Social workers need a mileage allowance rate that takes account of rising fuel costs and adequately covers their travel costs for work purposes. Nobody should be penalised financially for doing their jobs. Additionally, a fairer rate would help to recruit and retain social workers at a time when the profession urgently needs more capacity to meet increasing demands.

Social workers and social care staff, need and deserve to be better supported so they, in turn, can provide the best possible help to people. Instead, they currently absorb the impact of rising fuel costs, causing stress and worry when they're trying to support people, often in difficult circumstances.

We therefore support the calls of e-petition 600966 and urge you to use the upcoming Autumn Statement to review the current approved mileage allowance rate, with a view to implementing a fair and reasonable uprate in the non-taxable allowance to 60p per mile. We also ask that you work with devolved administrations on this matter where appropriate and relevant.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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National Director, BASW England

Alison Bavidge
National Director, Scottish
Association of Social Work