

**REPORT TO:** CABINET MEMBER - CORPORATE SERVICES  
**DATE:** 13 OCTOBER 2010  
**SUBJECT:** SICKNESS ABSENCE POSITION – QUARTER 1 2010/2011  
**WARDS AFFECTED:** ALL  
**REPORT OF:** MARK DALE, HEAD OF PERSONNEL  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** JAN MARTIN, SENIOR HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISER  
**EXEMPT/  
CONFIDENTIAL:** NO

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

To provide the Cabinet Member with information on sickness absence levels for all staff (including school based) during the first quarter of 2010/2011, together with any proposed improvements in sickness absence management as well as any current initiatives.

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:**

To promote reduction in sickness levels, and better targeting on priority areas and departments

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

It is recommended that:

- (i) the report is noted, particularly in respect of current management action and initiatives relating to sickness absence

**KEY DECISION:** No

**FORWARD PLAN:** Not appropriate

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the meeting

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

N/A

**IMPLICATIONS:** None

**Budget/Policy Framework:**

**Financial:**

<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2006/ 2007 £</b>	<b>2007/ 2008 £</b>	<b>2008/ 2009 £</b>	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

**Legal:** None**Risk Assessment:** N/A**Asset Management:** None**CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS**

There are no financial consequences and therefore the Finance Director has not been consulted

**CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:**

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2	Creating Safe Communities		√	
3	Jobs and Prosperity		√	
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Environmental Sustainability		√	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		√	
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8	Children and Young People		√	

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

ResourceLink has supplied all numerical data for this report.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Overall performance - corporate targets are 2.20% short term, 1.80% long term (4.0% overall)**

1. Based on records currently entered on the system, the total number of 'available days' from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 30 June 2010 (Quarter 1), including school-based staff, was 464,564 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) days. Total absence, both long and short term, was 16,189 FTE days. Overall absence rate was 3.49% - comprising of 1.55% short term and 1.94% long term. This equates to approximately 8.02 days per employee.
2. If the data for school-based staff are extracted there were 183,730 FTE days available. Corresponding total absence, both short and long term, was 7,849 FTE days equating to an overall rate of 4.27% (1.68% short term and 2.59% long term). This equates to approximately 9.82 days per employee.
3. The Local Government Association's most recently published survey (2008/2009) of 151 local authorities suggests that for all types of local authority the level of sickness absence equated to 9.2 FTE days and 11.3 FTE days for Metropolitan Authorities. Sefton's current performance compares favourably to these figures.
4. General absence management is extremely important at all times, however due to the current economic constraints it is even more essential than ever to minimise disruption to services and to prevent extra "stressors" on staff covering absence. Having said that absence levels historically and across all sectors tend to decrease where there are potential threats to job security. It will be interesting therefore to see if and how the current financial difficulties impact on absence levels within Sefton.

### **Departmental performance**

5. Table 1 (shown at ANNEX 1) illustrates departmental performance for the first quarter of 2010/2011. Figures exceeding the short and long terms targets are shaded.
6. Absence rates have clearly improved for this quarter with only a handful of departments failing to attain both of the corporate targets. Overall the figures are hopefully a positive indicator of the continuous work departments have undertaken with regard to sickness absence management.
7. Even though it has yet to achieve corporate targets, Operational Services Department clearly tackles its levels of absence with good effect. Rates of absence have continued to improve for at least the last five quarters and this should be acknowledged.
8. It is also evident that although progress continues to be made in many departments and in particular with regard to improvement in short term absence, the key focus continues to be that of long term absence. Although current long term figures continue to fall quarter on quarter departments must not become complacent and lose focus.

### **Reasons for absence**

9. Tables 2 and 3 (shown at ANNEX 2) illustrate the number of FTE days against the reasons for absence, both short and long term, for all quarters. The data have been split by gender, and left as FTE days, to give a sense of scale of absence.
10. Tables 4 and 5 (shown at ANNEX 3) illustrate the same data as Tables 2 and 3 but excluding school-based staff.
11. It should be noted that the highest reason for overall absence (short and long term), including that for schools is for Medical Illness which accounts for 3160 days lost or 19.50%. Infection ( 2877 days, 17.77%), Operation/Post Op Recovery ( 2784 days, 17.20%) and Mental Health (2670 days, 16.49%) type absences feature as the second, third and fourth reasons respectively.

### **Recent 'absence management' initiatives**

12. There are currently no new initiatives other than general absence management.

### **Other Information**

13. The last absence report suggested that future data would be presented in the format agreed by Members. Unfortunately the computer programmes required to enable this are still "under construction." Job Evaluation and changes to the organisation's structure have had to take priority. Consequently the new format will be implemented as soon as the programmes are ready to use, which is likely to be later in the year.

14. The Health Unit in conjunction with HR has outlined a programme of support for those employees who are currently at risk of redundancy. This includes a variety of measures to assist employees in coping with their situation and to hopefully enable them to remain at work. The programme will be made available to any employees who are identified as "at risk" in future.

### **Recommendations**

15. It is recommended that:

- (i) the report is noted, particularly in respect of current management action and initiatives relating to sickness absence





