

News release

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Illuminating Chinese New Year Together

Sunderland dads and their children have been earning their stripes after they came together to light up the Chinese New Year of the Tiger.

Dads and Kids Clubs from Sunderland Children's Centres joined the rest of the region in celebrating the Chinese New Year this week. Families from across the city came together for a series of special craft activities with a Chinese theme.

Children along with their fathers got stuck into the craft materials available during the special sessions and enjoyed making Chinese lanterns and tiger face masks, as well as trying traditional Chinese food.

David Walker, 49 from Houghton-le-Spring, has been coming to the Dads and Kids sessions with daughter Abigail, now three, for over two-and-a-half years. He said: "I think doing something special like this for the Chinese New Year is a great way for children to learn about another culture.

"Each week we do lots of different activities like painting, messy play and games to get everyone moving and active – the children always have a brilliant time. Coming along to the group has been one of the best things I've ever done - it's a really fantastic way for me to spend time with my daughter and it's been a great way to meet other dads in the area."

Councillor Pat Smith, Portfolio Holder for Children and Learning City within Sunderland City Council, said: "Sunderland is a diverse and culturally rich city. Teaching our children about different cultures is an important part of their education. Celebrations like Chinese New Year are a fun way of introducing children to other countries customs.

"Just as importantly, the Dads and Kids Club provides a place for all dads, granddads, uncles and carers to spend one-on-one time with their children. A lot of men tell us that they would like to be able to spend more time with their children, so Children's Centre groups like these

provide a regular opportunity for men to spend time with their children and have fun together as a family.”

Dads and Kids Clubs run every Saturday morning at Sunderland Children’s Centres, offering a range of activities including arts and crafts, sports, storytelling and toys and games, as well as encouraging health and well-being. The clubs are suitable for children of all ages as the activities are adapted to fit individual family needs.

Sunderland’s 17 Children’s Centres bring together a network of services including early education, childcare, health services, parenting support, and help for parents looking to find work or training in order to help provide every child across the city with the best possible start in life.