

# News release

November 2008

## **Sunderland Families Have Their Say on Their Services**

Following a series of unique listening events Sunderland Children's Services have been praised by families living across the city for the support and services which are offered to them by the council.

Sunderland Children's Services took to the streets of Sunderland to find out exactly what parents and children think of their services and which they regularly access. People were also asked how they thought services and facilities could be promoted to help raise awareness of what support is available to Sunderland families.

Comments collected at the various city locations applauded the Children's Centre toy libraries as well as the support provided to both parents and children through group activities. Parents also highlighted that the centres had helped their children to socialise and interact with other children, while also giving them an opportunity to meet new friends and benefit from grown up company.

Throughout the events over 120 families were consulted and overall family services in Sunderland received an average seven out of ten from the survey's participants. To help improve services families suggested that they would like to see an increase in the number of advertisements, more activities for older children and that a directory of services would be beneficial. Feedback collected during the listening events will be used to help further develop family services across the city.

Councillor Pat Smith, Cabinet Member for Children's Services within Sunderland City Council, explained: "It is extremely important that families have the chance to feedback on the services which they access. Programmes like the listening events provide the perfect opportunity for the council to find out what they're doing right and what may need to be improved upon from the people who matter the most, Sunderland families."

Sunderland Children's Services offer a range of services and facilities which are designed to provide every child with the best possible start in life. These include childcare options,

Sunderland's 17 Children's Centres, the Families Information Service, extended schools including out of school clubs and attendance.

Through these services families can access extensive family support, health services, financial advice, jobs in childcare, help with training and volunteering opportunities, advice on childcare options and much more.