

News release

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Families Help to Shape Children's Services

The future of Sunderland's Children's Centres is being shaped by the people who use them most – hundreds of families from across the city following a series of special consultation events.

During the consultation parents from across Sunderland were encouraged to give their views on the services at Sunderland Children's Centres and to suggest possible improvements.

The opinions collected in each area will be used to ensure that the delivery of services meets the individual needs of families, no matter where in the city they live.

The events were also aimed at families who had not used the centres before, in order to showcase the variety of services available to them, such as Play and Learn sessions, health advice and further learning, and to find out what they would like to see in centres.

Raj Singh, Extended Services Manager at Children's Services within Sunderland City Council, said: "Children's Centre staff are always looking for ways to tailor services for families so that they can meet the needs of their local communities.

"We appreciate that what works for families in one area may not be suitable in another, so it is important to keep in touch with local people to find out what they want to see in their nearest Children's Centre.

"We want to ensure that children and parents in Sunderland are able to make the most of the fantastic, free services provided by Children's Centres. These events will help centre staff to adapt services based on the needs of their local residents, so they can continue to provide services which really work for Sunderland families."

During the events, which took place throughout November 2010, families also had the opportunity to get advice from representatives of a wide range of organisations such as

Gentoo and Job Linkage. Sample demonstrations of Children's Centre activities, such as Stay and Play sessions and Toy Libraries, were also held at selected events.

Sunderland Children's Centres bring together free play and learn activities, health services, early education, childcare, parenting support and help for parents looking to find work or training. The centres are continually developing new links with local organisations and community groups to help provide every child in Sunderland with the best possible start in life.