

Universal Services

Sunderland Children's Centres

Sunderland Children's Centres help to give children in the city the best possible start in life. They offer activities for children and parents and help and support with the practical issues in bringing up a family. At Children's Centres you can find out all you need to know about young children. Centres provide:

- play and learning activities for you and your child to enjoy together
- the chance to meet other parents
- help and support in times of difficulty
- courses, training and volunteering opportunities
- affordable childcare (from 8am-6pm)
- support to young families in preparation for parenthood after birth
- antenatal classes, advice on breastfeeding and stopping smoking
- family information and advice (e.g. childcare, weaning and routines).

There are currently 17 Children's Centres in Sunderland. They can provide support and help for disabled children and children with special educational needs as well as more specialist services such as Early Support and Portage as appropriate. More details of these services are available in the Specialist Services section. If you would like more information or to find your nearest centre please ask your Health Visitor or contact the Families Information Service on 0191 520 5553 or visit www.sunderlandchildrenscentres.co.uk

Toy libraries

Through Toy libraries you can borrow toys, books, games and equipment for children up to the age of 14 years. Toy Libraries also sell a variety of arts and crafts materials. Toy Libraries give your child the chance to play and interact with other children while you get to spend quality time with your child in a fun and friendly environment. To join your local Toy Library or to find out opening times please contact your local Children's Centre.

Supported childcare

Support is available for families of disabled children up to 3 years old to access childcare for up to 12 weeks.

Short term childcare

Short term childcare is available for children aged 0-3. The children and families would have additional needs and the childcare would be to support crisis e.g. bereavement, hospitalisation or appointments etc for up to 6 weeks. For more information or to find out what support might be available to you, please contact your Health Visitor or the Children's Services Childcare Development Lead, Hetton Centre, Welfare Road, Hetton le Hole DH5 9NE Telephone: 0191 561 5638 or Email: pamela.nield@sunderland.gov.uk

Early Intervention and Locality Services

Early Intervention and Locality Services offers a range of support to help children with additional needs to access childcare. Support includes funding for specialist equipment, additional staff and training. For more information contact the Childcare Development Lead, Hetton Centre, Welfare Road, Hetton le Hole, DH5 9NE. Telephone: 0191 520 5553. lifeandfamily@sunderland.gov.uk

Sunderland Youth Development Group

Sunderland Youth Development Group works with voluntary sector providers across Sunderland to provide and facilitate informal educational opportunities, which enable young people from the ages of 13 to 25 to maximise their potential; to respond critically and creatively to their everyday experiences and to contribute to the cultural and political life of the city. There are currently 6 youth clubs and one 19-25 group operating which directly supports young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. There is an open referral system and forms are available from the address below. For more information please contact the Social Inclusion Co-ordinator, Sunderland Awards Centre, 270 Hylton Road, Sunderland SR4 7XJ. Telephone: 0191 561 7414

Connexions

Connexions Sunderland provide confidential information, advice and guidance for all 13-19 year olds, up to age 25 for young people with special needs, on a wide range of lifestyle issues including education, training, careers, employment and personal development opportunities. For more information please contact Connexions, Library 1st Floor, Fawcett Street, Sunderland, SR1 1RE or Tel: (0191) 5617333

Moving Forward

Moving Forward is an introduction to 'Transition Planning' for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and gives information about the process, what happens when and what the options are. For more information visit the Connexions website at www.connexions-tw.co.uk/movingforward. Connexions, Library 1st Floor, Fawcett Street, Sunderland, SR1 1RE or Tel: (0191) 5617333

Emergency Planning for parents/carers of disabled children and young people

This is a service that offers parent carers the opportunity of developing a plan which would provide cover when the carer experiences an emergency that stops them from being able to carry out their caring role. This would be a short term solution which would be until the emergency was over or a longer term solution could be arranged. Any parent carer or person with responsibilities for a child or young person aged 0-18 who has a physical disability, learning disability or long-term illness can have an emergency plan. The plan can be completed by yourself or you can ask for help from any professional who supports you or from Sunderland Carers Centre. The completed plan will need to be shared with people named in the plan. If the family have a Social Worker they may also agree for the plan to be saved on the Children's Services electronic system for reference. For more information contact the Sunderland Carers Centre on 0191 549 3768.

Young Carer's Card Scheme

A young carer is a person aged between 4 and 18 who helps to look after someone in the family at home because they are disabled, have been ill for a long time, have a mental health problem or a problem with alcohol or drugs. They may care alone or as part of a family.

Frequently young carers may be late for school, unable to attend detention at short notice, or may need to keep their mobile phone switched on. At secondary school, young people come across lots of different teachers and it can be frustrating for them to have to keep repeating why they are late etc.

The young carer's card scheme is a partnership between Children's Services and Sunderland Carers' Centre and aims to make school life a little easier for young carers. Young carers can carry the card with them at school and show the card to teachers when they are having problems.

The card is issued for a fixed time period and is authorised by the Headteacher. Information leaflets (which include an application form) are available within schools or by contacting Sunderland Carers' Centre on 0191 549 3768.

Parent Partnership Service

Parent Partnership can signpost parents to appropriate education services. Support can be offered to families with a child with Special Educational Needs (SEN) including:

- supporting parents of children with SEN in understanding the SEN Code of Practice
- offering information on schools, SEN agencies, national and local support groups
- supporting families through the special needs process

For more information, parents can contact the Parent Partnership Co-ordinator, Sandhill Centre, Grindon Lane, Sunderland SR3 4EN. Telephone: 0191 561 5643.

The Attendance Team

The Attendance Team is responsible for supporting pupils and schools specifically with matters relating to school attendance and elective home education. The Attendance Team undertakes work with parents of statutory school age pupils where unauthorised absence is identified; including where appropriate, those

who are attending mainstream school and approaching statutory but are not yet of statutory school age (i.e. Reception pupils). The Team's additional statutory duties include monitoring children in employment and licensed entertainment and the enforcement of relevant legislation. For more information contact the Attendance Team, Sandhill Centre, Grindon Lane, Sunderland SR3 4EN. Telephone: 0191 5615601, attendanceteam@sunderland.gov.uk

General Paediatric Services

A team of consultant paediatricians and children's nurses provides secondary health care for children and young people. There are two children's wards and also a High Dependency Unit for children and young people who are very ill and need specialist nursing care. Children and young people are usually referred by the GP, either for an outpatient appointment, or for inpatient care when the child is acutely unwell. The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (previously known as the Special Care Baby Unit) cares for babies born prematurely or who become ill at birth or in early life. The Paediatric Accident and Emergency department assesses and treats children and young people with injuries. Children and young people who are unwell should be seen first by the GP, but may then be sent for a second opinion to the paediatric team at the hospital. For more information contact the Paediatric & Neonatal Departments, Sunderland Royal Hospital, Kayll Road, Sunderland SR4 7TP. Telephone: 0191 5656256.

Health Visiting Service

The Health Visiting Service is made up of a team which includes health visitors, community staff nurses and nursery nurses. They work with families from before the child's birth until they transfer to the school nursing service. Health visitors are experienced registered nurses who undergo advanced training and mainly work with children and families. They work closely with social care, education and other health care professionals. Their aim is to improve the health and well being of individuals and communities, by helping people to improve their own health. The service is available to everyone. Staff nurses are registered nurses who work with individuals and groups towards healthier and safer lifestyles. Nursery nurses are skilled in child care and development and work with families and groups under the direction of the health visitor. For further information please visit the Sunderland Teaching Primary Care 6Trust's website at: www.sotw.nhs.uk There is a Specialist Health Practitioner for Children and Young People with Additional Support Needs. See the Specialist Services section for more details.

School Nursing Service

The School Nursing service is provided to all children or young people from 4-18 years. The service includes:

- regular health needs assessment of the school age population
- school health screening and assessment
- health protection programmes such as immunisations and vaccination against infectious diseases
- health promotion sessions to children, young people families and teachers
- supporting vulnerable children and families
- providing drop-in sessions for children and young people in school for any health issues
- advice and support for any child who develops health or learning problems
- advice and support in relation to healthy diet and lifestyle, emotional well being, sexual health, substance misuse, bedwetting and bladder and bowel problems.

If you would like to talk to your school nurse you can obtain contact details from your individual school.

Soundwaves

Soundwaves is a service that creates audio for visually impaired people. These include a monthly magazine consisting of what's on, short stories and lots of nostalgia, a weekly recording of readings taken from the local newspapers, and a monthly magazine consisting of readings taken from the Sunderland Football Echo. For more information contact Julie Donaldson on Telephone 0191 555 6514 or email office@soundwaves-online.org.uk or visit www.soundwaves-online.org.uk