



***Hello* - Frequently Asked Questions**

Issue 1: November 2010

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Section A: Introducing *Hello*

Q: What is *Hello*?

A: *Hello* is the 2011 national year of communication - a campaign to increase understanding of how important it is for children and young people to develop good communication skills.

Speech, language and communication underpin everything we do. Communication is a skill that we learn and develop and is something we can all improve. For some children, their daily struggle to communicate means they are shut out of everyday life.

Hello, run by over 35 leading voluntary and community organisations, aims to make communication for all children and young people a priority in homes and schools across the UK so that they can live life to the full. The campaign is backed by the Department for Education and BT.

Hello activity will stretch across public, voluntary and commercial sectors with direct involvement from frontline staff across all areas of the campaign.

Visit www.hello.org.uk to get involved and sign up for regular updates.

Q: Who is running *Hello*?

A: *Hello* is being run by The Communication Trust, a coalition of over 35 leading voluntary and not-for-profit sector organisations with expertise in speech, language and communication, in partnership with Jean Gross, the Government's Communication Champion.

The Communication Trust consortium includes the following voluntary and community organisations;

1Voice, ACE Centre North, The ACE Centre Advisory Trust, Action for Children, Afasic, ARCOS (The Association for Rehabilitation of Communication and Oral Skills), Auditory Verbal UK, Barnardo's, British Stammering Association, Candle, CENMAC, Chailey Heritage Trust, Communication Matters, Contact a Family, DialogueLab, Elklan, I CAN, KIDS Charity, Language for Learning, The Makaton Charity, Mencap, Michael Palin Centre, MERU, National Association of Professionals concerned with Language Impairment in Children (NAPLIC), National Autistic Society (NAS), National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS), National Literacy Trust, Paget Gorman Society, Radio in Schools, Scope, Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Association (SEBDA), Signalong Group, Selective Mutism Information and Research Association (SMIRA), St Catherine's, Symbol UK Ltd, The Children's Society, The Children's Trust Tadworth, The Learning Partnership and Treehouse.

Q: Who is supporting *Hello*?

A: *Hello* is backed by the Department of Education, BT and Pearson Assessment.

Hello is also supported by representatives of the children’s workforce through The Communication Trust’s advisory group. This includes Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP), Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC), General Teaching Council for England (GTC), National Association of Head teachers (NAHT), National Association of Professionals concerned with Language Impairment in Children (NAPLIC), National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), National Youth Agency, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT), Special Educational Needs Joint Initiative for Training (SENJIT), Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT), Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) and The University of Cambridge - Faculty of Education.

Q: What is the need for *Hello*?

A: In the 21st century, the ability to communicate – to say what you want to say and to understand what other people are saying - is fundamental. Speech, language and communication underpins everything we do. Babbling babies do not become talkative toddlers by chance. Communication is a skill that we learn and develop and is something we can all improve. For some children, their daily struggle to communicate means they are shut out of everyday life.

In the UK, as many as 10% of children – over 1 million - have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), which are not caused by social disadvantage, or by having English as an additional language or other external factors. This 10% is made of around 7% of children who have SLCN as their main difficulty and others who have SLCN as a result of another condition such as autism, hearing impairment, general learning difficulties. This means that in the average classroom there are 2 or 3 children with such communication difficulties.

In areas of social deprivation upwards of 50% of children – equivalent to as many as 17 per classroom - are starting school with delayed language¹. There is evidence to suggest these difficulties persist through to secondary school affecting learning and attainment.

A child with a speech, language and communication need may have speech that is difficult to understand. They might struggle to say words or sentences or not understand words that are being used. They may have difficulties knowing how to talk and listen to others during a conversation or simply have a limited vocabulary. Children may have any combination or all of these difficulties.

¹ Basic Skills Agency (2002), *Summary Report into Young Children’s Skills on Entry to Education*). Also Locke and Ginsborg (2002) *Development and Disadvantage: Implications for Early Years* IJCLD Vol 27 No 1

We face an issue that is 'invisible'. There is a critical lack of understanding about what communication is and why it matters. The vast majority of children with communication difficulties look like any other children. This means that their needs often get misinterpreted, misdiagnosed or missed altogether.

Q: How did *Hello* come about?

A: The national year of communication was originally proposed by John Bercow MP – now Speaker of the House of Commons - in his July 2008 Review of Services for Children and Young People (0-19) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

The recommendations on how to improve services for children and young people were subsequently accepted by the then Labour Government in the *Better Communication Action Plan*, published in December 2008. This included the appointment of a Communication Champion and a national year to make real and tangible improvements for children, young people and families.

Jean Gross was appointed Communication Champion in January 2010 to work across Government, delivery partners and other stakeholders to co-ordinate and build on initiatives to improve services for children and young people with SLCN.

Following a competitive tender process, The Communication Trust was appointed to manage and deliver the national year. Hello complements the Government's commitment to supporting children with SLCN and will help to achieve the recommendations of the Bercow Review.

Q: What did the Bercow Review find?

A: In 2008, the Bercow Report noted: "there is grossly inadequate recognition across society of the importance of communication development, let alone of the active steps needed to facilitate it. It is a skill which has to be taught, honed and nurtured. Yet . . . children's ability to communicate, to speak and to understand [is] taken for granted."

The Bercow Review was one of the most heavily responded to consultations that the former Department for Children, Schools and Families had, with the majority of responses coming from parents. It found that 77% of parents who responded said that they did not get the information and support that they needed when they needed it.

12% said they "needed to know where to look". Many felt alone because speech, language and communication needs was not understood by frontline staff (health visitors, doctors, early years and teachers) or family members.

To read the full Bercow Report, visit;

<http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/~media/Communication%20Trust/Documents/Bercow-Report1.ashx>

Q: What is the aim of the *Hello* campaign?

A: *Hello* – the 2011 national year of communication - aims to create a society that values the development of good communication as a way to live life to the full. The campaign will improve understanding and disseminate information on typical communication development, how to spot if children are struggling and where to go for help and support.

Hello will seek to prompt tangible improvements for the 1.2 million children and young people in the UK, with some form of long-term speech, language and communication needs. This means more support for parents and carers, earlier identification of difficulties and earlier, more appropriate, referral to specialist support (e.g. speech and language therapy). SLCN can affect children and their families severely and for life; providing these tangible improvements will ease what is often a difficult journey.

Q: Who is *Hello* targeting?

A: *Hello* is aimed mainly at the following audiences;

I. All parents/carers but particularly;

- Lower income parents /carers.
- Parents to be and parents / carers of 0 to 1 year olds (the baby stage).
- Parents / carers of 1 to 5 year olds.
- Parents of children identified as having SLCN

II. Children’s workforce, including;

- Early years practitioners
- Primary schools – particularly teachers / teaching assistants (TAs) / special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs)
- Secondary schools (particularly teachers / TAs / SENCOs).
- Health visitors.
- GPs and Nurse Practitioners.
- Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs)

III. Commissioners and service providers including;

- Local authorities.
- Primary Care Trusts.
- Head teachers.
- GPs and GP consortia.

IV. Young people aged 14 -19 years old.

Q: What will *Hello* achieve?

A: *Hello* will provide information and guidance on typical communication development, how to spot if children are struggling and where to go for help and support. We aim to reach

every new parent in 2011 with timely information and support on how to develop their child's language and communication, amongst other activity.

We will be using the national year of communication to deliver tangible improvements for children, young people and families affected by speech, language and communication needs. This will include more support for parents and carers, earlier identification of difficulties as well as earlier and more appropriate referral to specialist support.

No parent should feel alone or have to fight to navigate the system because their child's needs have been misunderstood, or in the worst situations, missed altogether. With this in mind, *Hello* will establish a group of parent mentors who will provide emotional and practical support to the 1% of families with a child with severe and complex needs. This will empower local communities to support children's communication and make them more aware of where to go locally for support.

Hello will engage young people (aged 14 – 19) directly to ensure they have the communication skills needed for work and life. Via the 'O2 Think Big' initiative, *Hello* will work with the National Youth Agency to offer 25 young people or groups small grants to participate in the national year.

The children's workforce will be provided with information and guidance in developing all children's speech and language and in identifying problems early on. Ages and stages booklets, milestone posters and clear and easy checklists of warning signs will be provided that help parents and professionals articulate concerns they have about a child.

In addition to that, *Hello* will promote both the importance of screening and workplace reform. Currently, too many children's speech and language needs are being missed. Screening is essential and needs to start with all the children's workforce possessing skills and knowledge in how children's communication develops and how to identify children who have difficulties. This will then enable those who are struggling to be identified as early as possible.

Importantly, the excellent work that is already taking place will be championed and acknowledged through a 'Good Communication' awards scheme. This offers an exciting opportunity to celebrate the best practice amongst the children's workforce and will shine a light on outstanding examples of multi-agency working and innovation.

Hello aims to help thousands of children and young people across the UK to improve their communication skills so they can live life to the full. It will greatly improve understanding of speech, language and communication needs and speech and language impairment (SLI), taking it to a level not seen before.

Q: What will I see in 2011?

A: We have planned monthly themes for *Hello* that covers January to December 2011. They are listed below.

- *January - Hello. Don't take communication for granted*
Learn more about how communication involves you in life.
- *February and March - Early chatter matters – from bump to birth and beyond*
Babbling babies don't turn into talkative toddlers by chance. It requires help and encouragement from you.
- *April - It's not just about talking*
Children learn to talk by listening, taking turns and interacting with others. These are the building blocks of communication.
- *May - Good communication begins at home*
Learn how to turn everyday activities into fun communication opportunities.
- *June - Imagine life for those that struggle*
Children who find communication hard, find life hard. Over 1 million children in the UK struggle to communicate.
- *July - Skills for work, life and play*
The power of communication helps you stand out from the crowd, connect with people and live life to the full.
- *August - Talk and go*
Develop your child's talking, listening and communication skills in the park, at a museum, in a cafe – even in the car.
- *September - Back to school*
Speech and language skills are vital in the classroom. Language is the way that teachers teach and children learn.
- *October - More than words*
Some children have little or no speech. They use facial expressions, signing, symbols or computer aides to communicate with others.
- *November - Celebrating communication*
Our ability to communicate is something to celebrate – it's what makes humans unique.
- *December - Talk to the future*
Children with severe and complex communication difficulties will struggle for life, not just in 2011.

For more information on the *Hello* monthly themes, log onto www.hello.org.uk and sign up to receive regular updates or email hello@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk.

Q: What is the purpose of the monthly themes?

A: We have devised monthly themes to help us give a real focus to each month. They explore in depth some of the key aspects of children’s communication development.

We hope everyone will think creatively about how the themes can be used locally to get as many people involved as possible. We will be providing, in due course, additional ideas and tips to help inspire you!

Q: I want to promote *Hello*. Any advice?

A: Use our *Hello e-Communications Toolkit*. This will give you information on *Hello*, which you can use in communications with your audiences and networks. This can be downloaded from www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/hello.

You can also join us at the following;

- Twitter – follow us at @Comm_nTrust and we will follow you back.
- Facebook – join us at <http://on.fb.me/9yHIIZ>.
- Blog – follow up at www.thecommunicationtrust.blogspot.com.

Q: Is there anything I can do now to support *Hello*?

A: There are a range of things you can do now to support *Hello*;

- Sign up to receive *Hello* updates at www.hello.org.uk. You will get to hear about all campaign developments as they happen.
- Look at our monthly themes at www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/hello and think about how you could use them locally.
- If you are a SENCO, order the latest publication *Don’t Get Me Wrong* at www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/downloads.
- If you work with parents of children with speech and language impairment, order *The SLI Handbook*. Visit www.ican.org.uk for more information.
- If you are involved with an early years setting, sign up for Chatterbox Challenge, the first *Hello* milestone event run by I CAN, the children’s communication charity. Chatterbox Challenge is the nation’s biggest children’s sing along. Email chatterbox@ican.org.uk to pre-register for your free activity pack.
- Please help us promote *Hello* to your colleagues and networks. You can download the *Hello* e-communications toolkit from www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/hello - this will give you all the information you need to add to your newsletters, websites, e-mails and even facebook pages.
- Pledge your support for *Hello*, set up a local multi-agency planning group (details below). Volunteer to be your school / setting or even area champion at hello@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk.
- If you work in early years or provide training, free materials are now available that supports the delivery of the Early Years Mandatory pathway in the new Level 3

Children's Workforce Diploma. Email enquiries@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk or call 020 7843 2517 to order yours now.

- Please keep us informed of your plans

Q: I want to set up my own local planning group, how could you support me and do you have any advice?

A: We strongly encourage multi-agency groups to come together to start planning for *Hello* in your locality. Please tell us at hello@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk if you are planning to set up a group or if you have one formed already.

This group could include the following;

- Health visitors
- Speech and language therapists
- Local authority early years teams, including Every Child a Talker (ECAT) consultants
- Children's centres managers
- School improvement services including literacy and mathematics consultants
- Inclusion services
- Educational psychologists
- Special schools and units
- Specialist schools for language and communication
- Mainstream school staff
- Parent partnership
- Parenting support groups
- Family information services
- Family learning teams
- Libraries and museums
- Youth workers, play workers, leisure services
- Youth offending teams
- Voluntary organisations
- Local higher and further education institutions
- Ethnic minority achievement services

We recommend the group thinks through a range of questions including;

- How does *Hello* fit with our local and regional priorities? (E.g. raising attainment levels in schools as speech, language and communication needs impacts on attainment)
- Reducing school exclusions – many children at risk of exclusion have 'hidden' speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
- Who are our priority target groups? Are they the same as the *Hello* audiences? (E.g. pupil premium – many children living in poverty are at high risk of SLCN affecting learning, attainment and friendships in schools)

- What do we want our audiences to do differently? (E.g. focus on speech, language and communication to support children's development / protective factor for long term impact of SLCN)
- What actions shall we take? (E.g. set up a local network / run a regional conference / embed speech, language and communication in mandatory training – e.g. Newly Qualified Teacher)
- How can we piggy -back on what is happening with *Hello* nationally? (E.g. sign up for Chatterbox Challenge. Get involved in National Family Week)
- What resources / initiatives do we have already?
- How can we share information or case studies with the *Hello* campaign so they can promote our work nationally?
- What resources do we need? (E.g. media pack, ages and stages guides for our parents / practitioners)
- Who might we approach locally to support / fund us? (E.g. local businesses / local media – do we need support to do this)
- How will we know if we have succeeded?

Keep an eye on the *Hello* website www.hello.org.uk. In time, you will be able to find out who is leading *Hello* in your area – it could be you!

Q: Can I get national funding for local activities?

A: We are sorry, but at this time there is no national grant funding for local activities. However, a number of resources have been or will be developed for *Hello* and are available to use locally. In addition, guidance on securing local funding will follow.

Q: How should we refer to *Hello* and what strap-line should we use?

A: When referring to *Hello*, the long hand version is *Hello* – a year to help all children communicate. To refer short-hand, use the *Hello* campaign.

If you want to add a short line to your website to say you are supporting *Hello*, you can add either of the following;

- [YOUR ORG NAME] is proud to support *Hello* [include *Hello* logo here]
- [YOUR ORG NAME] is proud to support *Hello*, a year to help all children communicate [include *Hello* logo here]

Q: Can we use the *Hello* brand locally or for our organisation?

A: To obtain the *Hello* logo, please e-mail hello@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk. We will be adding a full brand guideline document onto the *Hello* website in due course.

Q: What websites will you have available for the *Hello* campaign?

A: The *Hello* website (www.hello.org.uk) will include information about the campaign and ways to get involved. This will be linked directly to *Talking Point* (www.talkingpoint.org.uk), the information portal for comprehensive and easily accessible information for parents and professionals on speech, language and communication, which is being updated to support the national year.

Q: What resources have been specifically produced for *Hello*?

A: To date, we have produced the following publications;

- *Don't Get Me Wrong* – a publication for those who work with children and young people, who have some basic understanding of speech, language and communication needs, but would like to know more. To download a copy and to order, please visit www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/publications.
- *The SLI Handbook* – a A4 booklet that explains what a specific language impairment is, gives advice and support and shows where to go for further information. Commissioned by The Communication Trust, *The SLI Handbook* was written by I CAN and Afasic. Visit www.ican.org.uk for more information.

We are in the process of producing a range of other *Hello* materials including;

- *Hello* toolkit – a guide on how you can get involved.
- Ages and stages booklets for parents and professionals.
- Milestone posters for primary and secondary aged children.
- *Misunderstood* – a guide to explaining speech, language and communication needs.
- *Hello* 'roadshow in a box' toolkit. This will empower local settings, such as children's centres or speech and language therapy teams, to provide materials and simple advice to local communities through fun and engaging roadshow events.
- *Explaining AAC* publication to better support and include young people who stammer by removing jargon and complications around augmentative and alternative communication.
- *Hello* materials such as badges, posters, stickers etc.

If you have an excellent resource that you could add to our *Hello* suite of materials, email hello@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk. Also, tell us what is needed on the ground.

Q: Will you signpost to resources that already exist to support communication development and speech, language and communication needs?

A: Yes, and we already do on the *Talking Point* website (www.talkingpoint.org.uk). We would love to hear from you if you have a resource, factsheet, toolkit or case study of innovative practice that you want to shout about, email hello@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk.

Q: How can I sign up for regular updates at this stage?

A: Visit www.hello.org.uk to sign up for regular updates.

The website will be updated in December with additional information to help you plan your support of *Hello*. In the meantime, you can go to The Communication Trust's website www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/hello for background on *Hello* and a link to the monthly themes.

Q: I have a question that hasn't been answered in this document.

A: Please email us at hello@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk or call us at 020 7843 2550. We would be happy to talk through your thoughts and questions.

Section B: About speech, language and communication needs

Q: Why is communication so important for children?

A: In the 21st century, the ability to communicate – to say what you want to say and to understand what other people are saying - is fundamental.

Speech, language and communication underpins everything we do – making our needs known, expressing our likes and dislikes, interacting with others and building relationships. Yet so many of us take these skills for granted.

Babbling babies do not become talkative toddlers by chance. Communication is a skill that we learn and develop and is something we can all improve.

For some children and young people these skills are much harder to grasp and develop than others; they have speech, language and communication needs.

Q: What are speech, language and communication needs?

A: A child with a speech, language and communication need may have speech that is difficult to understand. They might struggle to say words or sentences or not understand words that are being used. They may have difficulties knowing how to talk and listen to others in a conversation or simply have a limited vocabulary. Children may have any combination or all of these difficulties. These barriers are often invisible to others, meaning their needs are often misinterpreted, misdiagnosed or missed altogether.

Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs may have problems with the following:

- They may have speech which is not clear and difficult to understand; they can say words and sentences, but they are very unclear so they can't get their messages across. Children with difficulties with speech sounds often struggle with learning to read and spell as the two skills are linked
- They may not be able to put words and sentences together well to get their messages across; they may have lots of ideas and thoughts, though struggle to get their messages across.
- Not being able to understand words and sentences. They can understand ideas and instructions, though not if explained through talking. For example, they might be able to build a complex lego model with picture instructions, but be unable to follow simple classroom instructions. These children can be able in many other ways, but difficulties understanding language impacts across all learning and social interaction.
- Not being able to have a conversation. These children often have very clear speech, a good vocabulary and can make good sentences. However, they may struggle to listen well. They may talk over you, not notice how you're feeling or take words literally. This can impact greatly on their ability to make and keep friends, though they may do well in other ways, such as with school work. They may be seen as rude or cheeky as they do not understand the rules of interaction.
- Having multiple barriers. Children may have any combination or all of these difficulties. They may struggle to understand what people are saying, be unable to get their words out, put sentences together or talk with people well.

These barriers are often invisible to others, meaning their needs are often misinterpreted, misdiagnosed or missed altogether. What may be seen are children struggling to learn to read, showing poor behaviour, having difficulties learning or socialising with others. Some children may become withdrawn or isolated.

Speech, language and communication difficulties cut across labels and diagnoses, so many children and young people with a range of special education needs labels also have speech, language and communication needs.

Q: How many children and young people are affected?

A: In some parts of the UK, particularly in areas of poverty, upwards of 50% of children are starting school with speech, language and communication needs. Their speech may be unclear, vocabulary is smaller, sentences are shorter and they are able to understand only simple instructions.

Some of these children may catch up with the rest of their class given the right support. However, there is also evidence that these difficulties can persist throughout their school support if they do not get timely support and intervention.

It is estimated that 10% of all children have long term of persistent speech, language and communication needs. This includes;

- 7% of children who have speech, language and communication needs as their main difficulty. This is also referred to as specific language impairment and is often severe and complex. There is no obvious reason or cause for these difficulties with language, and their non verbal skills are often well developed.
- 3% of children who have speech, language and communication needs as part of another condition such as autism, hearing impairment, general learning difficulties etc.
- Of these children, an estimated 1% of children have the most severe and complex speech, language and communication needs, which prevent them from expressing their basic needs.
- Children with speech, language and communication needs represent the most prevalent type of special education need amongst primary school pupils with statements of special educational needs.

Q: Are you saying children’s communication skills are getting worse?

A: There is no firm evidence that things are better or worse than they have been before. What we do know is that it is becoming more of an issue. Head teachers and employers are noticing it, changes in the job market are making it more of an imperative and there is also increased identification of speech, language and communication needs as a Special Educational Needs issue in schools.

Q: Do you have any compelling statistics we could use?

A: Yes, the following may help you.

- In the UK, one in ten children – over 1 million – have some form of speech, language and communication need, also known as SLCN (Law et al, 2000).
- In areas of poverty, over 50% of children are starting school with delayed speech, language and communication skills (I CAN Cost to the Nation, 2006).
- Only 43% of parents of 0 - 5 years olds were able to correctly identify the stages of communication (I CAN, 2007).
- A YouGov poll of 349 teachers found that only 27% had received training around speech, language and communication and 81% felt they would benefit from more training on this issue (The Communication Trust, 2007).
- US research found that by 4 a child in a professional family has experienced 45 million words. A child in a family receiving welfare support has experienced 13 million words (Hart and Risley, 1995).
- 50 – 90% of children with persistent speech, language and communication needs go on to have reading difficulties (Stothard, 1998).

- Low income children lag their middle income counterparts at school entry by nearly one year in vocabulary. The gap in language is very much larger than gaps in other cognitive skills (Waldfoegel et al, 2010)
- At the end of primary school, although nearly 80% of all children achieve the expected level in English, just 25% of children with SLCN reach that level – a gap of almost 55% (Bercow Review, 2008).
- At the end of Key Stage 4, the ‘attainment gap’ between children with SLCN and their peers is marked. Just 15% of children with SLCN achieve 5 GCSE A*-C or equivalent compared to 57% of all young people (Bercow Review, 2008).
- A study by the London School of Economics for the Prince’s Trust has estimated that the cost to the economy of educational underachievement is around £18 billion a year (Prince’s Trust, 2007).
- When language difficulties are resolved by the age of 5 and a half, students are more likely to go on to develop good reading and spelling skills. This good performance continues throughout their school careers and they pass as many exams on leaving school as children without a history of language disorder (Bishop and Adams, 1990).
- Two thirds of 7 -14 year olds with serious behaviour problems have language impairment (Cohen, 1998).
- Communication skills are well known as an area of weakness among many young people (CBI, 2007).
- At least 60% of young people in young offender institutions have communication difficulties (Bryan, K and MacKenzie, J, 2008).
- Those with a history of early language impairment are at higher risk of mental health problems e.g. 2.7 times more likely of having a social phobia by age 19 (Voci, 2006).

Section C: Organisations involved with Hello

Q: What is the remit of The Communication Trust?

A: The Communication Trust raises awareness of speech, language and communication issues amongst everyone who works with children and young people. It was founded by Afasic, BT, CDC (Council for Disabled Children) and children’s communication charity I CAN.

The Communication Trust manages a coalition of over 35 voluntary organisations and an advisory group that includes the *Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists*, *Association of Educational Psychologists* and the *National Association of Head Teachers*. The Trust’s work is supported by the Department for Education and other funders.

More information can be found at www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk. To subscribe to The Communication Trust’s monthly newsletter, email ‘subscribe’ to enquiries@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk.

Q: What else does The Communication Trust do?

A: In addition to managing and delivering the *Hello* campaign, The Communication Trust works to support the children's workforce across early years, primary, secondary and youth justice. Some examples of this work are below. Visit www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk to find out more about our work and publications.

Speech, language and communication framework

The Trust have produced the Speech, Language and Communication Framework (SLCF) that lists all the skills and knowledge that everyone working with children needs to know to support the communication development of all children and those with speech, language and communication needs. The stages range from the skills and knowledge that everyone who works with children and young people should have (universal) through to the specialised learning around SLCN at a postgraduate level (extension).

Practitioners who work with children can complete the SLCF online to evaluate their skills and knowledge of communication development (there is also a printed version available). They can then identify areas where they need to develop their knowledge. In addition whole settings can access the online assessment with a designated group number and collectively assess their developmental training needs in this area.

A Chance to Talk

A Chance to Talk (ACTT) is an innovative three way project between The Communication Trust, I CAN and Every Child a Chance Trust. *A Chance to Talk* is 3 WAVE approach to supporting the speech, language and communication skills of reception aged children.

Alongside supporting the development of strong universal provision, creating 'communication friendly schools' (Wave 1), *A Chance to Talk* includes a focused intervention aimed at supporting those children with language delay to 'catch up' (Wave 2) and the development of specialist support for those with more entrenched and long term difficulties (Wave 3).

A Chance to Talk is being developed based on existing best practice and available evidence of what works and will bring voluntary sector expertise and resources into partnership with local provision.

Youth Justice

The Communication Trust is working with a number of organisations, experts and academics to deliver projects aimed at helping frontline youth justice staff to better support young people with communication needs.

A range of materials have been produced for staff working in Youth Offending Teams (YOT), Secure Children's Homes (SCH) and Young Offenders Institutions (YOI) to increase awareness of the scale and impact of communication needs on young people within the youth justice system. This includes *Sentence Trouble*, a free guide to working with young

people with communication needs in the youth justice system, and a website www.sentencetrouble.info.

Q: What is the purpose of the Communication Champion?

A: The appointment of a Communication Champion was a recommendation of the Bercow Review alongside a national year of communication. The Communication Champion post is Government funded but is independent.

The role and remit of the Communication Champion includes the following;

- Promoting the importance of speech, language and communication for children across England amongst commissioners, service providers, the children’s workforce and the wider public with particular focus on those with speech, language and communication needs.
- Identifying and sharing good practice in supporting the development of speech, language and communication in children.
- Working across Government, delivery partners and other stakeholders to coordinate each initiative and build on prior work to improve services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs.
- Planning, organising and leading the National Year of Communication in 2011 -12. This builds on previous initiatives to raise awareness of the importance of speech, language and communication particularly for children with speech, language and communication needs, promote the sharing of effective strategies to encourage language development and engage local and national stakeholders in supporting the development of speech, language and communication.

Q: Who is the Communication Champion and what is their background?

A: Jean Gross is the Communication Champion .Jean has worked in the public sector, the third sector and in universities. She began her career as a teacher and educational psychologist, working daily with children, parents, teachers and other professionals to find solutions to problems affecting wellbeing and learning. She has been head of children’s services for children in a local authority and worked closely with health on joint commissioning for speech, language and communication needs, autistic spectrum disorders and child mental health services.

Jean was until 2005 Senior Director within the government’s Primary National Strategy, responsible for its work on overcoming barriers to achievement, and is a national expert on inclusion issues. She is a Visiting Fellow at London University’s Institute of Education. She frequently acts in an advisory capacity to government, most recently in writing its guidance on the application of school behaviour policies to vulnerable young people,

advising on the development of materials to promote social and emotional competence in secondary school pupils, and writing new national special needs materials for trainee teachers.

Jean is the author of numerous articles and best-selling books on special education needs, including *Special educational needs in the primary school: a practical guide* (Open University Press, 3rd edn, 2002), *Special educational needs and school improvement* (David Fulton, 2004), and the recent *Beating Bureaucracy in SEN* (NASEN/ Routledge).

As Director of the Every Child a Chance Trust, she has successfully championed the cause of children with significant literacy and numeracy difficulties, and secured government pick up of the charity's Every Child a Reader and Every Child Counts programmes, which as a result will now each reach 30,000 children a year.

Jean has throughout her career championed the needs of children with communication difficulties, whether these arise from social deprivation or to special educational needs.

In her local authority career she worked closely with the health service to commission a school-managed speech and language therapy service based in a group of schools in a deprived neighbourhood – providing specialist intervention for children with more severe needs, working to improve class teaching of speaking and listening for all children, devising targeted small-group intervention for some, and working with families on an innovative 'Family Talk' family learning scheme.

Within the government's National Strategies she highlighted the need for effective intervention to improve children's oral language skills and mobilised a diverse group of experts and stakeholders to plan a programme that was the forerunner to the Every Child a Talker initiative.

Q: I would like to get in contact with Jean Gross, how do I go about this?

A: You can email Jean Gross, Communication Champion at champion@thecommunicationcouncil.org. You can also visit the Communication Champion's website and blog at <http://www.thecommunicationcouncil.org>.

Q: What is on Talking Point?

A: *Talking Point* is the information portal online for parent and professionals on communication development and speech, language and communication needs. *Talking Point* is managed by I CAN, the children's communication charity, and was set up in partnership with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Afasic.

It is packed with information from a range of leading organisations as well as handy advice, top tips on developing communication and downloadable games and activities. *Talking Point* also includes a section, *Talking Links*, where you can find your nearest speech and language therapy service.

In preparation for the national year of communication, *Talking Point* is being redeveloped in order to be more accessibility and include additional information.

Q: How does *Hello* link to the Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists' Giving Voice campaign?

A: The Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists (RCSLT) has recently set in motion their *Giving Voice* campaign in a time where more severe funding constraints are being felt across the public sector. This will help the RCSLT and speech and language therapy services to demonstrate the unique value to national and local decision makers, while showing evidence of their efficiency and value for money in a time where more severe funding constraints are being felt across the public sector.

More information can be found at <http://www.rcslt.org/>. At the heart of this campaign are the following beliefs;

- Speech and Language Therapists are specialists who enable people to develop or regain vital communication and swallowing skills.
- Problems with speech and language imprison the individual and severely limit their participation in family life, the community, education and the world of work.
- Tackling communication and swallowing problems reduces avoidable costs and waste in the NHS, local authorities, the criminal justice system and the wider economy.
- Urgent changes are needed to support timely access to speech and language therapy for those who need it.

The Communication Trust and *Hello* campaign support the aims of *Giving Voice*. In the current economic situation, there are real concerns around speech and language therapists being made redundant and pressure being felt to reduce quality of service and spend less time talking to parents.

The *Hello* campaign is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of speech, language and communication and the crucial role that speech and language therapists play.

We are working with the RCSLT, and will continue to do so in the coming months, to ensure the *Hello* and *Giving Voice* campaigns complement and add value to each other.