

Press Release January 2012

Health and education must come together to ensure better communication provision for children and young people in the UK

Pearson Assessment responds to the outgoing Communication Champion's 'Two Year On' Report

Pearson Assessment today welcomes the 30 recommendations made by Jean Gross, outgoing Communication Champion for the UK, in her Two Years On report. The report which spans Jean Gross' time as an inspiring Communication Champion reviews the excellent work that has been taking place across the country, to support children and young people with speech, language and communication needs; and offers key recommendations for ensuring these services continue to evolve and improve.

As one of the key sponsors of the recent *Hello*, national year of communication campaign, Pearson Assessment are themselves currently reviewing the work that has been carried out and looking at ways in which they can continue to support professionals.

"From local community events to filming centres stories and running the Shine a Light Awards, 2011 was an important year for speech, language and communication at Pearson Assessment." says Chris Hall MD.

"It has been widely publicised that over 1 million children and young people struggle to communicate in England today, and this has real affects on communities, employers and the economy. As a psychological, health and educational assessment publisher we come into regular contact with professionals working with children, young people and adults who have SLCN and can see the effects that a lack of communication skills and a lack of services can have. This made it important for us to be involved in the national *Hello* campaign, and support those directly affected."

"We hope that the recommendations made by Jean Gross will be taken-up by communities, families, health and education departments, so that her inspiring legacy continues. We were particularly heartened to see Jean Gross' calls for children with behavioural difficulties to be screened for underlying SLCN problems, and believe that the three-wave approach for promoting communication skills is an ideal way to start to bring together different services across health and education."

"It was particularly rewarding to see that our Shine a Light winners were referenced in the report. Stoke on Trent's multi-agency strategy Stoke Speaks Out and Every Sheffield Child Articulate and Literate are two prime examples of the some of the excellent work already being carried out."

"We will be continuing to use our experience as the number one provider of speech and language assessments to address the needs of professionals working in the SLCN arena. Some of our flagship products, the *Preschool Language Scale - Fourth Edition (PLS-4^{UK})*, *Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals - Fourth Edition UK (CELF-4^{UK})* and *CELF-Preschool 2^{UK}* are already being used by The Communication Trust in their Talk of the Town project."

Jean Gross' report covers five key themes including; increasing cuts to front-line services and the variability for these services to be jointly commissioned, the centrality of good communication skills to children's learning, wellbeing and life-chances, her concerns around the gaps in services for school-aged children and the need to continually raise awareness and ensure parents receive the guidance they need to support their children's development. The report concludes by highlighting, "If these recommendations can be enacted, the future really will improve for children and young people with SLCN and their families."

A copy of Jean Gross' Two Years On: final report of the Communication Champion for children can be downloaded from www.hello.org.uk

Further information on the range of full assessments and screeners Pearson Assessment has available for SLCN can be found at www.psychcorp.co.uk

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Notes for editors

About Pearson Assessment

- Pearson Assessment is the world's largest commercial developer and distributor of educational assessments and psychological testing materials with a 90 year history of commitment to researching and developing products to a reliable high standard.
- Pearson Assessment is the number one provider of speech and language assessments
- Pearson Assessment is dedicated to the pursuit of professional excellence, leadership, and growth through acquisition, development, publication, and the maintenance of quality assessment tools in order to anticipate and meet the needs of its customers.
- Pearson Assessment have sponsored the *Hello* campaign (national year of communication) in 2011.
- For more information, visit www.psychcorp.co.uk or follow @PsychCorpUK

About The Communication Trust

- The Communication Trust is a campaigning voice for children with speech, language and communication needs. It raises awareness, influences policy, promotes best practice among the children's workforce and commissions work from its members.
- It is a coalition of nearly 50 leading voluntary sector organisations and an advisory group, which includes the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, Association of Educational Psychologists and the General Teaching Council.
- The Trust ran *Hello* the national year of communication – in conjunction with Jean Gross, the Government's Communication Champion for Children – aiming to make children's communication a priority in homes and schools across the UK. The Trust was one of the campaigning voices that secured the Bercow Review in 2008, which ultimately led to the year of communication.
- For more information about the Trust visit www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk or www.hello.org.uk

About Jean's role as Communication Champion for Children

- Jean Gross is England's outgoing Communication Champion for children. She was appointed by government in response to the 2008 Bercow Review of support for children with speech, language and communication needs.
- The Communication Champion has been responsible for working across government, delivery partners and other stakeholders to co-ordinate and build on initiatives to improve services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs.
- The *Hello* campaign is being run by The Communication Trust in partnership with the Communication Champion.
- For more information go to www.thecommunicationcouncil.org Please note this website will no longer be updated from 31st December.