



Press Response

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KING'S SPEECH IS "JUST THE TIP OF A MASSIVE ICEBERG"

THE COMMUNICATION TRUST RESPONDS TO RELEASE OF '*THE KINGS SPEECH*'

As *The Kings Speech* is crowned a box office success and with the Golden Globes and Oscars in sight, The Communication Trust - a unique coalition of 40 voluntary and community organisations with expertise in speech, language and communication - have warned that "stammering is just the tip of a massive iceberg and many children struggle on a day to day basis with 'hidden' communication difficulties that can get misunderstood, misinterpreted or just missed altogether."

Wendy Lee, Professional Director for The Communication Trust, which is set to launch a landmark campaign to make children's communication development a national priority, said; "*The King's Speech* packs an emotional punch with its portrayal of one man's struggle to communicate and we're delighted to see the interest from both the media and the public in this very important issue. The film has brought this issue out from the shadows and into the spotlight it deserves.

"However, stammering is only the tip of a massive iceberg. Public recognition and understanding of other communication difficulties remains regrettably low. And yet, 10% of children in Britain have some form of long term and persistent communication difficulty – that's on average 2-3 children in every classroom. *The Kings Speech* will help people understand the impact of a stammer, but for many children and young people, their communication difficulties are more hidden."

The Communication Trust is launching the *Hello* campaign – 2011 national year of communication – in partnership with Jean Gross, the Government's Communication Champion at the end of this month. Backing has already been received from the Department of Education, Department of Health, BT, Pearson Assessment and over 50 organisations with an interest in this area.

To mark the official launch of *Hello* at the end of this month, The Communication Trust and Jean Gross will be releasing the results of a 'myth busting' perception survey of what the nation really thinks about communication as well as a UK first – findings from 7,000 young people exploring their views on the importance of communication skills.

In addition to this, there will be a host of resources available for parents and professionals including 'ages and stages' booklets and an interactive progress checker for anyone who is concerned about a child they know.

Communication difficulties: know how to spot the signs?

A child or young person with a speech, language and / or communication difficulty may have speech that is difficult to understand; they can say words and sentences, but they are very unclear so they can't get their messages across.

They might struggle to say words or sentences or understand words and sentences if explained through talking – however they might be able to build a complex model with picture instructions but be unable to follow simple classroom instructions.

They may have difficulties knowing how to talk and listen to others during a conversation, they may be seen as rude or cheeky but in fact they do not understand the rules of social interaction. Children and young people may simply have a limited vocabulary or a combination of all these difficulties.

Communication difficulties can affect children and young people early, severely and for life. The *Hello* campaign will provide tangible improvements to ease what is often a difficult journey and ensure their needs are less 'invisible' in society.

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For further information, case studies or to find out more about the Hello campaign, please contact: Annie Broadbent, Press and PR Officer, The Communication Trust. Email abroadbent@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk or call 0207 843 2564 / 07960520166

About Hello

- Hello is the national year of communication – a campaign to increase understanding of how important it is for children and young people to develop good communication skills.
- The campaign is run by The Communication Trust, a coalition of 40 leading voluntary sector organisations; in partnership with Jean Gross, the Government's Communication Champion. Together we aim to make 2011 the year when children's communication skills become a priority in schools and homes across the country.
- The campaign is backed by the Department for Education and supported by BT and Pearson Assessment.
- Please visit www.hello.org.uk to sign up for further information on how you can help improve the communication skills of children and young people – so that they can live their life to the full.
- The national year 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).

About The Communication Trust

- The Communication Trust raises awareness of speech, language and communication issues amongst everyone that 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 40 voluntary organisations and an advisory group that includes the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, Association of Educational Psychologists and the General Teaching Council.
- The Trust's work is supported by the Department for Education and other funders. More information can be found at www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk.