

For immediate release  
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## **I CAN sings *Hello* to the forthcoming Chatterbox Challenge event!**

I CAN, the children's communication charity, is gearing up for the exciting 2011 *Chatterbox Challenge* and calling on as many people as possible to register for our Guinness World Record™. The *Chatterbox Challenge* the first event of the recently launched *Hello* campaign, the national year of communication. Sponsored by Openreach, the *Challenge* encourages children and young people to practise their communication skills, whilst raising money for the many children in the UK who struggle to communicate.

The *Chatterbox Challenge* is a mass participation activity for children aged 0-5, with children in schools, nurseries and childminding groups across the UK practising rhymes and songs to develop their communication skills. This year, the *Challenge* is hoping to break a Guinness World Record™ attempt on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 for the largest number of children singing 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes' simultaneously across the UK in multiple venues.

Jean Gross, Communication Champion said: "The *Chatterbox Challenge* is a milestone event for our *Hello* campaign – the national year of communication. It will help get across the message that the ability to communicate well is the 21<sup>st</sup> century life skill. Through learning simple songs, rhymes and taking part in language activities linked to the rhymes, *Chatterbox Challenge* will help thousands of young children to develop their ability to talk and understand. I hope that every family, pre-school setting and school all want to join in. And I'm really looking forward to singing 'Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes' myself on 1<sup>st</sup> March."

Taking part in the *Chatterbox Challenge* offers schools and families the chance to get involved in *Hello*, the national year of communication as well as raising awareness of different ways to develop children's communication skills. The *Hello* campaign, backed by I CAN, is running a year of activities and initiatives to increase understanding amongst parents and schools across the UK of how important it is for children and young people to develop essential communication skills. The recently launched *Hello* campaign found that the need for information is vital, as confusion exists with parents around every age and stage of children's communication development.

I CAN's speech and language therapists have created the *Chatterbox Challenge* pack, filled with fun and entertaining educational songs and activities, which all help support and develop children's speech and language skills. Children are encouraged to fundraise for their *Chatterbox Challenge*, and enjoy practising and singing nursery rhymes to directly support others who need extra help with talking and understanding. *Hello* have found that only one in five parents know that long-term communication difficulties, the difficulties faced by the children I CAN work with, are caused by genetic and biological factors.

Steve Robertson, Openreach Chief Executive Officer, said, "Communication is at the heart of the Openreach business and we know how important it is for children to develop good communication skills to succeed in life. This is our fourth year sponsoring I CAN's *Chatterbox Challenge* as part of our 'First Mile' programme. We feel the *Chatterbox Challenge* is a great way for children to develop those vital speech and language skills whilst helping children who struggle with communication. By working with I CAN, we hope all children will get the start in life they deserve."

Virginia Beardshaw, I CAN Chief Executive added, "It's wonderful to have incredible support from Openreach who sponsor us to help give children the ability to communicate. Children up and down the country can take part and improve their own skills while helping thousands of others who are not at their level. We called for this national year of communication back in 2007, and truly believe this is the spotlight we need to raise the roof, and sing the loudest to make the difference that is so badly needed."

The *Chatterbox Challenge* website is live and with less than one month to take part in the Guinness World Record™, register for your pack today at: [www.chatterboxchallenge.co.uk](http://www.chatterboxchallenge.co.uk).

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For more information, interviews and pictures, please contact Priya Shah (I CAN Press and PR Manager) at [media@ican.org.uk](mailto:media@ican.org.uk) or 0207 843 2542.

#### **About I CAN:**

- I CAN is the children's communication charity. [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk) or [www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk)
- We are here to ensure that no child is left out or left behind because of a difficulty speaking or understanding.
- Nobody wants a child's potential to be wasted. It happens because communication difficulties are not visible, often mistaken for something else, or not noticed at all.
- I CAN's mission is to make sure that everyone in contact with children knows how important communication is, what a communication difficulty looks like and what they can do to help.
- We do this through:
  - Increasing public awareness of the problems children face.
  - Giving expert advice to parents and families about what to look out for and what to do.
  - Providing assessments for children so that their families know what support will meet their needs.
  - Giving teachers and people working with children the skills to help children who struggle.
  - Campaigning to ensure children and families get a better deal.
  - Producing resources, DVDs, posters and other information to help parents and practitioners support children with their communication development.

At the very heart of I CAN are our special schools which give expert care and education to children with problems so severe their needs cannot be met elsewhere.

#### **About Openreach:**

- Thanks to the generous support of Openreach, every penny you raise through the Chatterbox Challenge goes towards helping I CAN support children across the UK that are struggling to communicate.
- Openreach maintain and work to improve the network that connects tens of millions of homes and businesses to telephone exchanges across the UK. They do so on behalf of Communication Provider customers, who sell communication-based services to consumers and businesses. They are also leading BT's drive to make Super-fast Fibre Access available to customers across the UK. This means that up to two-thirds of homes should be able to enjoy super-fast broadband services by 2015.
- With communication at the heart of its business, Openreach is passionate about I CAN's work, and recognises how critical good communication skills are to every young child as they embark on life's journey.
- Learn more about Openreach at [www.openreach.co.uk/csr](http://www.openreach.co.uk/csr)

## 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 supported by BT and Pearson Assessment and backed by the Department for Education.
- 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). For more information on *Hello*, please go to [www.hello.org.uk](http://www.hello.org.uk)