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WHAT WORKS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS

The Communication Trust, a coalition of 47 voluntary organisations with expertise in speech, language and communication, has launched a database of evidence-based interventions for supporting children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

The *What Works* database is the first of its kind in the sector and is the result of collaboration between the Better Communication Research Programme and the Trust. *What Works* is currently in its prototype phase and the Trust is rolling out a year-long consultation with key stakeholders and practitioners to make sure the database is fit for purpose. At present 60 interventions, identified through extensive consultation with practitioners in the sector and a thorough literature review, are included in the database and more will be added as the project progresses. New interventions can be submitted and will be examined by a moderating group of academics, as well as representatives from The Communication Trust and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT), which has supported the project by adding its endorsement of the database.

Wendy Lee, Professional Director of The Communication Trust and one of the creators of the database, said; “It’s really important that we use the best evidence to support children and young people with SLCN, but it can be difficult for busy practitioners to know about latest research. *What Works* provides easy access to a bank of interventions for identifying and supporting children with SLCN. We know from speaking to teachers and other educators that they are often aware that children need support but do not always know the best ways to provide it. We’re keen too that interventions are delivered alongside good workforce development and other important elements which are explained on the website.

“We know that *What Works* is by no means an exhaustive list of all the robust well-evidenced interventions out there and we’re keen to continue adding content throughout the prototype phase and beyond. We will be collating feedback from users and reviewing new interventions through the moderating group. This is a consultative phase and we openly welcome views on how useful *What Works* is for speech and language therapists and those working in education and the early years.”

Kamini Gadhok, Chief Executive of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, said: “The RCSLT is delighted to have had the opportunity to work with partners at The Communication

Trust to support the evaluation and development of the *What Works* website. At a time when commissioning of services is becoming more complex, any resource that supports this process is going to be vital.”

Users of the online *What Works* database are encouraged to give feedback via an online form to ensure the database is meeting their needs. The database can be accessed here www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/whatworks

Anyone who has evidenced interventions they would like to be considered for the database can contact The Communication Trust on enquiries@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk. All interventions submitted for consideration are robustly evaluated by the moderating group.

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For more information or to arrange interviews with Wendy Lee or any of the academics on the Better Communication Research Programme, please contact Lynne Milford, Press & PR Officer, on 0207 843 2526 or enquiries@thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

Notes to editors

About The Communication Trust

- The Communication Trust is a coalition of nearly 50 leading voluntary sector and community-based organisations with expertise in speech, language and communication.
- It does this by raising awareness, influencing policy, promoting best practice among the children’s workforce and commissioning work from our members.
- It harnesses collective expertise to support the children's workforce and commissioners to meet the speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) of all children and young people.
- In 2011, the Trust ran the *Hello* campaign (national year of communication) in partnership with Jean Gross in her role as the Government’s Communication Champion for children.
- In December 2012, the Trust released an evaluation of the *Hello* campaign and published its planned strategy for 2013-17.
- These documents and other information about the Trust is available here: www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk