

Press Release – for immediate release

THE ES TRUST CONSORTIUM CELEBRATES EXTENSION OF EARLY SUPPORT

The ES Trust Consortium, comprising more than 50 voluntary, community and private sector organisations, is celebrating today's announcement from the Department for Education that they have been awarded the contract to extend Early Support, the successful government initiative, to young people and families with children of all ages.

Early Support helps parents from the moment their child is diagnosed, particularly if they are identified as having severe or complex difficulties. Early Support promotes the provision of key working so that all families and young people have help to navigate the system, as well as providing help and advice on the child's, young person's and families' particular requirements and priorities.

Dr Kim Bevan, the new Early Support Director, said: "Members of our consortium have worked with Early Support for a number of years and we are delighted that the principles are being taken up for older children and young people. The strength of the Consortium comes from the fact that we represent an extensive range of families and professionals.

"The Department for Education Green Paper on SEN and Disability identifies Early Support as a key approach to meeting the needs of children, young people and families. Early Support has been successful in the early years - the aim now is to ensure that it informs and supports the development of an integrated model of working with disabled children and young people of all ages and their families.

"Achievement for All, who are part of our delivery team, will lead on the work in schools, developing an integrated approach to supporting schools, children, young people and parents, bringing together Early Support and Achievement for All principles, approaches, materials and training. Wherever possible we aim to avoid duplication of effort and we aim to enable a joined up, streamlined approach to support across the sector."

Dr Hilary Emery, Chief Executive of the National Children's Bureau said: 'We are delighted to be involved in a rich consortium building on and extending the original Early Support work and providing an integrated approach to meeting the needs of disabled children, young people and their families.'

Sarah Teather MP, Minister for Children and Families, said: “We're proposing some of the biggest reforms to special educational needs and to help disabled children and we're testing out the best ways of doing this over the next year. But it's important that children, young people and their families get help and support now, from organisations they trust.

“That's why we're funding and extending programmes that have been successful so far and that parents have told us they value – like short breaks and helping young people make the often difficult transition from school to employment or training.”

Anita Kerwin-Nye, Director of 40-strong coalition The Communication Trust – a member of the ES Trust Consortium - said: “The Communication Trust is delighted to be part of the ES Trust consortium. Families with disabled children too often struggle to get help, support and access to services. We have lobbied hard with other partners for the successful 0-5 programme to be extended even further so more families can benefit from timely information and intervention.”

The ES Trust consortium are calling for the statutory, voluntary, community and private sector, for parents and young people to join the consortium’s endeavours to improve services for children and young people with additional needs. For more information or to be involved email Kim Bevan at kim@estrust.org.uk

For further information

For press enquiries, please contact Lynne Milford, Press Officer, on 0207 8432564 or email lmilford@thecomunicationtrust.org.uk or contact Laura Smith, head of Press and PR, on 07766 651366.

Notes to editors

- The members of the ES Trust Consortium are: National Children’s Bureau (lead contractor), ES Trust Community Interest Company (operational lead), The National Autistic Society, Scope, Achievement for All (leading on school age children), Care Coordination Network Cymru (CCNC), Early Years Equality, Elizabeth Andrews (former Director of Early Support), Helen Sanderson Associates, Hope Street Centre, Include Me Too, London Borough of Bromley, Preschool Learning Alliance, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), Sense, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council & Signpost Inclusion , Sue Lewis, The Communication Trust (which includes over 40 organisations), The Open University, and Wolverhampton City Council & Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust.
- The remit for the consortium is:
 - Develop, deliver and sustain Early Support materials, resources and training and adapt them for use up the age range

- Develop and deliver key working training
 - Ensure multi-agency, strategic engagement of the whole sector, including parents, children and young people
 - Ensure parents, children and young people and the professionals who work with them take ownership of Early Support and key working and are able to sustain it beyond the funded period.
- The new contracts announced by the Government will run until 2013 with scope to extend for a further two years subject to agreement and satisfactory performance for more details visit www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/