



Press Release – For Immediate Release (19.12.2011)

## **HOLDING OUT FOR OUR *HELLO HEROES***

The Communication Trust, a consortium of nearly 50 leading voluntary organisations, held a celebratory *Hello Heroes* event last week (14.12.2011) to mark the close of the national year of communication (known as the *Hello* campaign), run in partnership with Jean Gross, the Government's Communication Champion.

14 *Hello Heroes* (representing Head teachers, speech and language therapists and joint commissioning leads) met with the Minister for Children and Families Sarah Teather to discuss their highlight of the national year and the big issues for speech, language and communication in 2012. They also visited Number 10 Downing Street and had their picture taken outside the most famous front door in the UK.

They then joined 80 other *Hello Heroes*, drawn from The Communication Trust's network of local coordinators and partners, at the BT Tower for a celebratory afternoon. Organised by BT, a sponsor of *Hello*, the event thanked individuals for all their hard work and commitment to the campaign.

Attendees heard presentations on national year activities and were treated to a 'Journey through *Hello*' – an exhibition showcasing the national year monthly themes. The *Hello Heroes* were then whizzed up to the top of the BT Tower to enjoy spectacular views across London.

Anita Kerwin-Nye, Director of The Communication Trust, says: "2011 has been a fantastic year for the issue of speech, language and communication. Thanks to the support of The Communication Trust's consortium members and sponsors, BT and Pearson Assessment, the *Hello* campaign has exceeded all our expectations.

"The *Hello Heroes* event celebrated the outstanding contribution made by local coordinators and partners to raise awareness and disseminate information throughout the country. The context they have been working within has been extremely challenging. This is why they are our *Hello Heroes*. We have been delighted to work in partnership with Communication Champion, Jean Gross on the *Hello* campaign and its legacy will continue into 2012. We will be evaluating the campaign over the next few months and ensuring children and young people's speech, language and communication remains high on the political agenda and in people's minds.

Jean Gross, England's Communication Champion for children, said: "It's been a pleasure and a privilege to hold the position of Communication Champion for Children. The *Hello Heroes* event has applauded the work of local supporters who have been instrumental in making the national year a success. I have enjoyed working with each and every one of them.

"My final report 'Two Years On' will be released at the end of this month. It details the excellent work I've seen on my visits. It also highlights the plight of children and young people with speech, language and communication needs who are still not getting the support and interventions they need.

"I am making a number of recommendations to the Department for Education, Department of Health and local authorities in charge of commissioning to improve information and services for those affected by communication difficulties. The work of The Communication Trust and other voluntary sector partners will be essential in continuing to make a lasting difference in this area."

Julie Hindley, *Community Investment Manager* from BT, said: "We are delighted to have sponsored the *Hello* campaign. Good communication is a key part of our business and it was fantastic to be able to host this event to thank everyone for their excellent work this year. We have been amazed by the work we have seen."

The Communication Trust's *Hello Journey* document is available to download here <http://www.hello.org.uk/resources/resources/hello-campaign-resources/hello-journey.aspx>

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### **Notes for editors**

#### **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](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk) or [www.hello.org.uk](http://www.hello.org.uk)

## About BT

- BT is one of the world's leading providers of communications solutions and services, operating in more than 170 countries.
- Its principal activities include the provision of networked IT services globally; local, national and international telecommunications services to our customers for use at home, at work and on the move; broadband and internet products and services and converged fixed/mobile products and services. BT consists principally of four lines of business: BT Global Services, Openreach, BT Retail and BT Wholesale.
- In the year ended 31 March 2011, BT Group's revenue was £20,076 million with profit before taxation of £1,717 million.
- British Telecommunications plc (BT) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BT Group plc and encompasses virtually all businesses and assets of the BT Group. BT Group plc is listed on stock exchanges in London and New York.
- For more information, visit [www.bt.com/aboutbt](http://www.bt.com/aboutbt)