



Communication Champion's CBE welcomed by *Hello* campaign leaders

The Communication Trust, a consortium of nearly 50 voluntary groups specialising in speech, language and communication, has welcomed news that Jean Gross, Communication Champion for Children, received a CBE in the New Year's Honours List for services to education.

Mrs Gross has had an illustrious career in education, campaigning to improve provision for children with special education needs, working in the public sector, the third sector and in universities. Most recently she was appointed as the Government's Communication Champion and for the past two years has worked in close collaboration with the Trust to make the 2011 national year of communication – the *Hello* Campaign – a huge success, raising the profile of children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and promoting and improving the services they receive.

She travelled all over the UK, speaking at conferences and visiting schools, nurseries and local authorities to spread the word about the benefits of good communication skills and joined up commissioning. She was also a judge and a presenter at the Trust's Shine a Light Awards 2011 in November.

Anita Kerwin-Nye, director of The Communication Trust, said: "We are delighted to hear that Jean Gross has been honoured and we thank her for her wonderful work to support the 1 million children who have a severe speech, language and communication need. We hope her work continues into the future.

"The Trust led the call from the Third Sector for a champion to take forward work on improving joined up commissioning of services for children with SLCN and we were delighted by Jean's appointment. She has been a worthy champion, touring the country to see first hand what was happening in different areas and gathering information on best practice for service improvement.

"In troubling times for health and education she has championed the cause and helped find solutions. She has, for example, modelled a solution for Alternative and Augmentative Communication provision that would allow this

government to efficiently and cost effectively ensure that every child who needs extra equipment to communicate will be ensured a voice.”

Mrs Gross began her career as a teacher and educational psychologist, working daily with children, parents, teachers and other professionals to find solutions to problems affecting wellbeing and learning. She has been head of children’s services in a large urban local authority, responsible for SEN, behaviour and attendance policy and practice. Here she worked closely with health services on joint commissioning for autism, speech and language and child mental health needs. Until 2005 she was Senior Director within the government’s Primary National Strategy, responsible for its work on overcoming barriers to achievement, including the influential SEAL approach to developing children’s social and emotional competences.

As Director of the Every Child a Chance Trust, she successfully championed the cause of children with significant literacy and numeracy difficulties, bringing together the interest of the business, charitable and public sectors in tackling social exclusion through high-impact early intervention programmes. The resulting Every Child a Reader and Every Child Counts programmes each reached 30,000 children a year at their peak in 2011 – the very lowest achieving six and seven year olds in the country.

In January Mrs Gross will publish her end-of-contract report *Two Years On*, which contains her findings from her two years in post and recommendations for improving services and provision for children with SLCN.

-Ends-

For more information contact press officer Lynne Milford on 07948391555 or media and campaigns manager Laura Smith on 07766 551366

Notes to editors

About Jean Gross

- Jean Gross is England’s Communication Champion for children, responsible for working across government, delivery partners and other stakeholders to co-ordinate and build on initiatives to improve services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs.
- She has worked alongside The Communication Trust during 2011 as part of the *Hello* Campaign, the national year of communication.
- She has been a Visiting Fellow at both Bristol University and London University’s Institute of Education. She has frequently acted in an advisory capacity to government, for example writing its guidance on the application of school behaviour policies to vulnerable young people, and writing new national special needs materials for trainee teachers.

She sat on the expert advisory group for the Tickell Early Years Foundation Stage Review.

- Jean is a national expert on special educational needs, and the author of numerous articles and best-selling books. Her contribution has been to transform the way we think about how to improve the attainment and wellbeing of learners with SEN, through practical demonstration of what can be done if we use brief, evidence-based interventions, manage interventions well, and at the same time seek to improve teachers' skills in everyday inclusive classroom teaching.

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 or www.hello.org.uk