

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****15th April 2011****Covering Report for the National Year of Communication****1.0 Purpose of Report**

To introduce Members of the Young Peoples Overview & Scrutiny Committee to the *Hello* Campaign which marks the National Year of Communication attached at annex A.

2.0 Background

The aim of the National Year of Communication is to help all children and young people fulfil their potential through better communication. This initiative was originally proposed in John Bercow's 2008 *Review of Services for Children and Young People 0-19 with Speech, Language and Communication Needs*. He states that up to half of all children in some parts of the country are growing up with significant problems speaking or communicating and that those troubles can have much wider social consequences.

"If a child does not benefit from early intervention, there are multiple risks which may become evident over a period of years – of lower educational attainment, of behavioural problems, of emotional and psychological difficulties, of poorer employment prospects, of challenges to mental health and, in some cases, of a descent into criminality." John Bercow

Earlier this year the *Hello* Campaign was launched by the Communication Trust to mark the National Year of Communication. The *Hello* Campaign aims to make communication for all children and young people a priority in homes and schools across the UK so that they can live life to the full.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members of the Committee are requested to note the information in this report and the *Hello* North Yorks Report attached at annex A.

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Background Documents: None

Annexes: Annex A

**“Hello North Yorks!”
The National Year of Communication**



2011 sees the National Year of Communication, an initiative recommended by John Bercow MP in his 2008 Review of Services for Children and Young People with Speech, Language and Communication Needs. John Bercow noted that “there is grossly inadequate recognition across society of the importance of communication development.” In his 2008 Review of Services for Children and Young People (0-19) with speech, language and communication needs, he recommended, and government agreed, that a campaign should be organised to increase understanding of how important it is to be good at communicating.

The Communication Trust, a consortium of over 40 leading organisations with expertise in speech, language and communication are the driving force behind the campaign and will work in partnership with Jean Gross, the Government’s Communication Champion. The eagerly anticipated **Hello!** campaign – national year of communication, will provide a 12 month focus on the critical importance of speech, language and communication in our lives.



Why have a national year?

- Communication is a fundamental life skill that anyone can learn and improve. It is how we connect with another person and it underpins everything we do.
- In the UK today, it is estimated that over 1 million children have long term persistent speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). This can affect them early, severely and for life.
- In addition, in areas of poverty, over 50% of children are starting school with delayed language skills. They may have smaller vocabulary, unclear speech or be able to understand only simple instructions
- For many of these children, their daily struggle to communicate means that they are shut out of everyday life. These barriers are often invisible to others.

“Hello North Yorkshire!”

Good communication skills are essential to improving the life chances of North Yorkshire’s children and young people. Almost everything we do involves speech, language and communication. Being able to make our needs known, expressing our likes and dislikes, interacting with others and building relationships are life skills we cannot afford to be without. Yet, so many of us take these skills for granted....

North Yorkshire, in partnership with the Communication Trust, aims to raise the profile of speech and language and make communication for all children and young people a priority in homes and schools across the County so that they children can live life to the full.

Planning for the National Year within North Yorkshire is being led by a multi agency group with representatives from Children and Young People’s Services and the NHS Speech and Language Therapy teams, chaired by the Communication and Interaction Network team. Jenny Morgan, Network Coordinator for Communication and Interaction has been nominated by the Communication Trust to lead the initiative in North Yorkshire.

The aim of the year is to increase awareness of the importance of communication as a life skill, and demonstrate how the whole community can support its development for all children and young people, including those who experience real difficulties. The target audience is the entire children’s workforce including: Children’s Centres; childminders; schools and settings; youth services; social care services. Through those professionals the aim is to reach out to parents, carers, families, communities and children and young people themselves.

In North Yorkshire we are planning a range of events including the following:

- a calendar containing ‘Top Tips for Talking’ which will go out to every school and nursery
- participation in the national (Guinness) world record attempt for the largest number of people singing Heads Shoulders Knees and Toes on March 1st
- monthly mailings to participating teams and schools with tips, ideas and initiatives
- training courses available including signing courses and accredited training for teaching assistants
- promotion of resources available to support schools and parents
- accrediting nurseries and schools using the ICAN national standards for communication supportive environments
- launching local authority guidance to schools on developing communication supportive environments
- developing a suite of information and leaflets for schools, parents and professionals.

“Communication is most important thing for all our children– it’s their key to life”.

Parent quoted in Bercow report 2009

Make a note of the “Hello” – Monthly Themes

January	February	March	April	May	June
Hello, don't take communication for granted	Early chatter matters – from bump to birth and beyond		It's not just about talking	Good communication begins at home	Imagine life for those that struggle
Learn more about how communication involves you in life	Babbling babies don't turn into talkative toddlers by chance. It requires help and encouragement from you		Children learn to talk by listening, taking turns and interacting with others. These are the building blocks of communication	Learn how to turn everyday activities into fun communication opportunities	Children who find communication hard, find life hard. Over 1 million children in the UK struggle to communicate
July	August	September	October	November	December
Skills for work, life and play	Talk and go	Back to school	More than words	Celebrating Communication	Talk to the future
The power of communication helps you stand out from the crowd, connect with people and live life to the full	Develop your child's talking, listening and communication skills in the park, at a museum, in a café – even in the car	Speech and language skills are vital in the classroom. Language is the way that teachers teach and children learn	Some children have little or no speech. They use facial expressions, singing, symbols or computer aides to communicate with others	Our ability to communicate is something to celebrate – it's what makes humans unique	Children with severe and complex communication difficulties will struggle for life, not just in 2012

- To register your school, setting or voluntary organisation to take part in the 'Hello' national sing along event on 1st March 2011
- To join our mailing list and get to hear about all developments as they happen, share your ideas, register interest in participating in events, or to keep us informed of your plans and activities so that we can promote them and work with you, please contact: Carol-ann.howe@northyorks.gov.uk

I don't understand words

Some children struggle to understand words and sentences. Like when you go to a foreign country and you don't understand the language – eventually you would just pick it up. These children can't pick it up.

These children need specialist speech and language support to learn language - they have a speech and language impairment.

They can be as able as other children their age in other ways, but understanding language is very difficult for them.....

I can't get words out

Some children know what they want to say, but words come out muddled or unclear.

For others, the words come out, but speech is very unclear and difficult for other people to understand. Some children may have a stammer. Others can't find the words they need – like when you know someone's name and just can't remember... Or they can't organise their words and sentences, so talk is confused and difficult to follow.

These children have a speech and language impairment. They can be as able as other children their age in other ways, but talking is very difficult for them.....

The Five Communication Barriers

**Learning to talk is a
complicated skill and can
break down in different
ways.**

I don't have enough words

Some children are young for their age when it comes to talking. They don't understand or use as many words as other children their age; sentences are short, they may have poor listening skills or unclear speech for their age.

Many of these children have the potential to catch up with their peers with the right support.....

I have multiple barriers

Some children struggle with different aspects of communication - they just don't understand what people are saying. They take longer to process language; their sentences are short and speech unclear. They may also have additional learning difficulties, physical difficulties, hearing difficulties.

These children often communicate in their own ways and can have lots to say.....

I don't know how to have a conversation

Some children can talk clearly and in sentences, they just don't know how to use these skills to have a conversation. They might not look at you or listen well or might interrupt too much or talk about only their own interests. Often these children want to talk and make friends, they just don't know how.

They can be as able as other children their age in other ways, but communicating with others is very difficult for them.....

Poor communication impacts on...



EXAM

Educational achievement

- 50 - 90% of children with persistent SLCN go on to have reading difficulties
- Only a fifth of children with SLCN reach the expected levels for their age in English and Maths at age 11



Behaviour/vulnerability

- 2/3 of 7-14 year olds with serious behaviour problems have language impairment
- Children with SLCN are more likely to be bullied



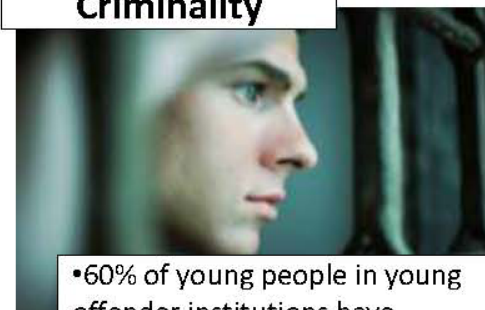
Mental health

- 40% of 7 to 14 year olds referred to child psychiatric services had a language impairment that had never been suspected



Employability

- "...communication skills are the most important employability skills and a lack of them in a candidate is a deal breaker... for many employers". (Sir Michael Rake, BT)



Criminality

- 60% of young people in young offender institutions have communication difficulties



Disadvantage Cycle

- Children from low income families lag behind high income counterparts at school entry by sixteen months in vocabulary.
- Vocabulary at age 5 has been found to be the best predictor of whether children who experienced social deprivation in childhood were able to 'buck the trend' and escape poverty in later adult life