

Autumn 2023

NEWSLETTER

Keeping you up to date with News and Events



New aphasia guidelines

Since Gill Jackson founded Dyscover nearly 30 years ago, we have been at the forefront in developing strategies and exploring innovations to help people with aphasia to reach their full potential.

The recently published National Clinical Guidelines for Stroke 2023, **reinforce the value of our work**. This includes supported conversation groups, communication aids, peer support, family support and our challenge programme which offers the chance to **get out into the wider world**.

The North East Trust for Aphasia (NETA), fellow Aphasia Alliance members, have produced these great infographics.

National clinical guidelines for stroke 2023	National clinical guidelines for stroke 2023
People with aphasia should  Be assessed / receive treatment from a speech and language therapist. Have the nature of their aphasia explained to themselves and their significant others	People with aphasia should  Have access to social activities, peer support groups, return to work programmes
 Have access to a Speech and Language Therapist for as long as they make meaningful gains	 Be assessed and monitored for depression and have access to psychological therapies
 Be offered digital therapies / tools and be trained in use of these technologies	 Families / carers should receive training from an SLT in communication skills, and how they can promote autonomy and social participation
 Be considered for intensive therapy programmes from 3 months post stroke	 Be given information on local and national aphasia groups and referred as appropriate

From New Zealand to Newcastle

We had positive feedback from across the world after the launch of our Instagram account during Aphasia Awareness Month.

Service Co-ordinator, Suzanne, worked closely with members, some relatives and volunteers, using film to capture what it's like to have aphasia. The emotions, impact and positive recovery stories were posted across the month of June. Please follow us @DyscoverAphasia on Instagram.



Pledge wall Raise 30

Our Community Fundraising Coordinator Liz launched the Pledge Wall as **part of our 30th Anniversary celebrations**. Pledges are put up on the wall and when they have been completed the amount raised will be added.





Volunteer Jim from the Thursday morning group was one of the first to add his pledge. **Members have joined in, too**. Read about Cam and Marco's successes on Page 7.

To find out more about Dyscover

Please go to www.dyscover.org.uk or contact us for details of our online visitor sessions on Zoom, or to receive our regular newsletters.

Follow us on social media

 To find our page on Facebook search for Dyscover non-profit organisation.

 @dyscoveraphasia

 @DyscoverAphasia



Update from the Trustees

As we enter another new term, John and Alice have asked me to write this term's report and, **as one of the new Trustees**, provide some thoughts on Dyscover and the important role it plays.

Firstly, I'd like to say how honoured I am to have been asked to come on board. The more I have seen and assimilated the important support and services Dyscover provides to its members, the more I am **thankful to have joined such a great charity**. As well as normal trustee activities, I have had the valuable opportunity to volunteer, meet and **support our members at the weekly golf sessions**.

Earlier this month, I met with Alice and Lin to be taken through the **exciting plans we have for our online expansion**. We should all be proud of the work undertaken by the project team to date, to increase our reach and help improve the lives of people with aphasia around the country.

Thank you for making me so welcome and providing me with an opportunity to help make a difference. I hope to meet many more of you over the coming months. I am off to work out how I can personally **contribute to our "Challenge 30" programme!** **Roger Young,**



Spotlight on Speech and Language Therapist Lin Cockayne

Lin decided on a **change of career** and trained as a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) after meeting so many highly skilled and compassionate health professionals caring for her grandma. Before that she had worked in **research and management jobs** in the voluntary sector and local government. A highlight was travelling all over the world for the Overseas

Development Institute.

After completing her SLT qualification at University College London, Lin worked in East London and at City University. She joined Dyscover in May 2022 and **runs our Kingston groups and some of our Zoom groups**.

What does she enjoy about her job? "I love the welcoming, supportive community at Dyscover and **being part of people's long-term recovery** as they regain skills and confidence."

Lin was one of three members of staff who ran a **six-month development project to explore opportunities for expanding our online service**. Surveys and conversations with people across the UK revealed significant gaps in provision.

Following the survey, our first step was to add a new online foundation group in the Summer term. The group continues this Autumn, moving into an extend programme. "It has been hugely enjoyable," says Lin, "and there is lots of learning as we find out what works best."

Outside work, Lin enjoys spending time with family and friends, going kayaking and walking the South West Coast Path with her son and daughter.

Around Dyscover

How are we doing?

We had a good response to our Annual Satisfaction Survey with 77 replies. When asked to rate their opinion of Dyscover on a scale of 1 to 5, we scored a **4.75 average rating from members and 4.45 from relatives.**

We asked how Dyscover helped members this year:

86% of respondents said that it had **helped their communication.**

84% believed it had **helped their confidence.**

80% said that it made them feel part of a community which **understands aphasia.**

Members were given a choice of 10 words to describe their experience of attending a regular Dyscover group. The three most popular responses were;

Friendship **65%**

Laughter **61%**

Confidence building **42%**

Funding update from Alice

In May it was an honour to welcome a group of **Surrey Freemason representatives** from several different chapters and lodges. Each of them had fundraised and contributed towards a huge donation of over £7k for office equipment, including IT, laptops and a new iPad for the groups. They enjoyed meeting members and finding out more about Dyscover. The donation has **had a huge impact** on improving the efficiency of the office and fundraising events.

We continue to work hard at formulating a large **fundraising plan for our online expansion**, taking into consideration recent learning from the new soft start online group.

We have received funding for the arts and music elements of the Challenge programme. A generous grant from **The Worshipful Company of Grocers** supports our diversified training, for both in-person and online volunteers.



Welcome, Julie

Our new Service Manager and Lead SLT, **JULIE SAMUEL**, will be starting midway through the Autumn term. She has **over 25 years' experience in Speech and Language**



Therapy, with an impressive career progression in the NHS. Julie moves on from a leadership role with the community neuro rehab team at The Poplars, Epsom.



HELEN INGRAM Midway through last term we said **goodbye to SLT Assistant, Helen.** As well as working with Kington and online groups, Helen was part of the team researching online expansion.



BECS TANOUS, already a volunteer, is now also an **SLT Assistant at Leatherhead's Thursday PM group.**

NETA

Our Lead SLT Rhona visited Kathy Cann at the North East Trust for Aphasia (NETA) in July. It was clear that **NETA and Dyscover**

have a huge amount in common, with their shared aims of providing long-term support for people with aphasia. We agreed to strengthen our links in the future through our membership of the Aphasia Alliance and by aiming to **connect our members more effectively.**



Research collaborations

A long-term **collaboration with King's College London** is looking at developing technology to improve successful access to the media for people with aphasia.

Some of our expert Ambassadors, all former teachers and lecturers themselves, are helping to shape change for people with aphasia through a **project with University College London.**

Groups in action

“I could do this every day.”

That was one of the many positive comments we received after our new online foundation course which started last term.

The Dyscover Online Project demonstrated the **need for more online support** for people with aphasia at all stages of their journey after a stroke.

The **new 10-week course** was led by Dyscover Speech and Language Therapists, Barbara and Lin, with the support of a trained volunteer, Fiona.

The course gave the members a space to talk about stroke and aphasia, to **learn and practise communication strategies**, and meet other people with aphasia.

Members told us **meeting other people experiencing the same challenges** was really important to them. We invited them back a new online group starting this term. It is building on the fantastic start that the members had made.

They are sharing experiences and ideas and supporting and encouraging each other as they practise **new ways of communicating** and gain confidence in everyday conversations and challenges.

“I like the people and the way it’s done. Not just me... we have the same thing”

“Brilliant! A fantastic way of meeting people other than within your area... and from the comfort of your own home”

“Hearing all the laughter! Hearing him tell me about all the conversations he’s had... it’s uplifting and encouraging.”

Stars of Instagram

On 1st June **@DyscoverAphasia** launched on Instagram. We asked our members to explain how aphasia impacts them and the value of long-term specialist support.

We published three posts a week during June, using headlines, photographs and films. So many members were involved in planning, filming and deciding the content of these posts.

We also featured a member-led interview on **what it means to volunteer** at Dyscover. Many thanks to member Nial for his expert input in editing the longer excerpts.



Flags

Some **great conversations about travel** were sparked

when members recently enjoyed an activity created by our SLT Assistants, which included flags and the nationalities of famous people.



Know your volunteer

During Volunteers’ Week, members were fascinated to **discover more about the volunteers who support them**. Their wide-ranging anecdotes generated conversations from snorkelling experiences and rollercoasters to unusual pets and karaoke singing. Kingston volunteer Dzen revealed she **has a black belt in Aikido**.



Groups in action

Health and Wellbeing

Kingston members shared their health and wellbeing tips with the group recently, capturing a **wonderful range of positive activities** they do to stay happy and healthy.

We love the fact that attending Dyscover's groups, **taking part in our activities** and being a Dyscover ambassador were all considered important wellbeing activities.

What makes you happy?

To tie in with Mental Health Awareness Week, Thursday morning members shared the things that make them happy. **For many, it was being outdoors in nature** and visiting gardens. For Trish, Thursdays are a 'happy' day when she comes to Dyscover, talking and laughing with friends. Coffee and cake at her favourite seaside café also ranked very high on her list!



Sarah's visit

Kingston Members were delighted to meet **Dyscover Ambassador, Sarah**, who shared her own experience of aphasia. They were fascinated to hear about Sarah's teaching career and love of France, which sparked several conversations. Everyone was particularly impressed by Sarah's experience of **leading a Reading Group** at Dyscover and her return to driving.



End of term

At a special request from the members, the Thursday Group **visited Denbies Vineyard** for their last session. The drizzle did not dampen spirits and everyone enjoyed the train tour and the atmospheric views through the mist to Box Hill.



Spotlight on Steve Steere



Wednesday morning member Steve had his **stroke 16 years ago**, but although he heard of Dyscover, he couldn't join us because he lived too far away in central Sussex. Steve learnt to

drive again and a move to Horsham meant that he was able to join us six years ago.

Steve lives on his own, so opportunities to practise speaking are limited. He **greatly values his time at Dyscover**. "I've made friends," he says, "and my confidence has grown." Group members have many things in common, so he **feels "ordinary and relaxed"**.

Challenge activities that he enjoys include **horse riding and swimming**. Steve is also a member of the small online Reading Group.

Last year Steve attended an intensive five-week speech and language therapy course at the National Hospital for Neurology. The benefits seem to be ongoing and **his fluency continues to improve**. This year he is taking part in a research project with Kings College London.

Before his stroke, Steve was the **director of a tech firm**. He was also very keen on DIY, something he still likes doing.

Steve has moved house again, this time to a maisonette in Crawley, and he now has a dog, Rolo. **Meeting other dog walkers gives him the chance to socialise a little**.

Have you Heard

Volunteers

We celebrated Volunteers' Week with a **lunch to say thank you to all our wonderful volunteers**. The staff team made some cakes and sandwiches, and everyone enjoyed the sunshine in our beautiful courtyard garden (which is also maintained by a team of volunteers!) Kingston Volunteer Danni also got to see our brand-new banner in which she stars! If you would like to **find out more about joining our volunteer team**, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Liz: lgrace@dyscover.org.uk



Are you happy?

We were delighted that this year's **volunteer survey** gave some very positive answers: **94%** were very satisfied with training and support received **94%** were very satisfied with how we have communicated **88%** feel highly valued.

Dzen has been a volunteer at Kingston since 2019. She has now taken up a full-time role as an SLT Assistant at Charing Cross Hospital.

PPA

Our Leatherhead offices are now being well used every Friday by the **Primary Progressive Aphasia Service (PPA)**. In October we will be reporting on the outcomes of this initial 12-month project. To date we have responded to 50 referrals and have provided **more than 65 assessment and therapy sessions to couples**.



Alice is seeking funding to continue this unique and vital support.

PPA is a rare dementia and **people living with the condition often feel isolated**. In April and August, Rosemary led two 'Mixer events', bringing together five couples experiencing similar symptoms and challenges. She has also curated an online information and support group for eight 'daughters', who have a parent with PPA.

In September Rosemary will be presenting at an **International Conference** hosted by the British Aphasiology Society.

Gymnastics

Following a popular taster session, we launched the first **Accessible**

Gymnastics Course last term, after a long period of planning and development with Leatherhead and Dorking Gymnastics Club. After a warm-up, all members tried a **circuit of challenges** and finished with some trampolining.



Carers' Week

We support whole families affected by aphasia in a variety of ways, including Communication Partner Training. During Carers' Week, we held one of our **regular family support meetings** and welcomed our youngest attendees to date.



A new look

Flags, a pullup and vinyl banners will support us at promotional and fundraising events and activities.



Fundraising

Come to the Ball

We holding a 30th
Anniversary Grand Ball on
27th April 2024 at
Kingswood Golf Club. It

will include a drinks
reception, three-course meal, live music,
dancing, raffle, and an auction. Tickets are
now on sale: [jumblebee.co.uk/
dyscover30thball](https://jumblebee.co.uk/dyscover30thball)



We are looking for sponsors and donations of auction prizes. if you/friends or family own a business that might be interested in sponsoring this fantastic event, or have prizes to donate, please do get in touch with our Community Fundraising Coordinator Liz: lgrace@dyscover.org.uk

Race Night

Landlords
Sam and
Jamie Carey



of the **Well House Inn** pub, Chipstead, hosted a lively and successful charity Race Night for Dyscover, raising £1,500.

Diary dates

SILVER BAND CONCERT The Mole Valley Silver Band are raising funds for us on **14th October** at the Good Shepherd Church in Tadworth at 2.30. Tickets £10. Book at: [Mole Valley Silver Band Concert \(jumblebee.co.uk\)](https://jumblebee.co.uk/mole-valley-silver-band-concert)

GREAT BALLOON DEBATE on **18th October** at Ashted Peace Memorial Hall, 7 to 10pm. £20 tickets include a fish and chip supper. Book at: [Balloon Debate \(jumblebee.co.uk\)](https://jumblebee.co.uk/balloon-debate)

BRIDGE MASTERCLASS WITH ANDREW ROBSON. **27th October** 1.30 to 6pm at Old Barn Hall, Bookham. Tickets: [Andrew Robson Bridge Masterclass 2023 \(jumblebee.co.uk\)](https://jumblebee.co.uk/andrew-robson-bridge-masterclass-2023)

Pledges from Cam and Marco

Members have been quick to support our Raise 30 campaign.



Cam Hayward can swim with one arm and one leg, and his pledge was to swim eight lengths of the Dorking pool for five weeks. He has so far raised £1,000.



Marco Tolentino's pledge was to walk for 45 minutes every day on a treadmill. He has raised £1,785.

Sky dive

Our brave volunteer Tae successfully completed her **10,000ft skydive**. She



says that it was so much fun that **she wants to do it again!** She has smashed her target, raising £1,207 when we went to press.

Open Garden

Visitors enjoyed a sunny afternoon In **Sue Edwards'**



beautiful garden, plus music from Low Key Affair, a band whose members include Jim and Christine. The event raised £565.

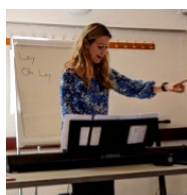
Holiday Activities

Forty members took part in a successful Challenge Programme this Summer, with several attending multiple sessions.

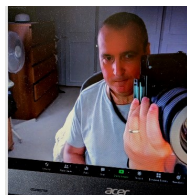
A return to High Ashurst left ten members exhausted but highly motivated. Archery, low ropes and a challenge course and then the 25-metre climbing wall and abseil. **Team-work, peer support, new friendships** and lots of laughs throughout the day.



Zoom and Face-to-Face members met together for a **coffee, cake and catch-up** at Squires Garden Centre in Twickenham.



Music Therapy allowed members to practise **rhythm sequencing**, copying, composing, making choices and giving preferences.



Paul ran a Zoom session on **how to take great photos**, describing the **best equipment and techniques** to overcome physical difficulties caused by stroke.

We also ran sessions for: **Pilates, Companion Cycling, Art and Shooting - on the Live Fire Range!**



Top Draw - a different Christmas gift

Anyone who is given a share in Dyscover's Top Draw Club as a Christmas present has the **chance to win one or more of 25 cash prizes during 2024. Annual shares in the club cost just £10** and there are five draws throughout the year. Half of the cost of each share goes to Dyscover, with the rest distributed as prizes. Full details are on our website: dyscover.org.uk

Mole Valley Lottery

The Mole Valley Lottery has now been running for over two years and several of our members have won prizes.

The lottery not only **raises funds for local charities**, but also helps local environmental causes. Draws are held weekly and tickets start at £1 each week.

You can **buy tickets to support Dyscover** at: molevalleylottery.co.uk/support/dyscover

CONTACT US

www.dyscover.org.uk



Dyscover Limited, Leatherhead Court, Woodlands Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BN
Tel: 01737 819419 Email: info@dyscover.org.uk

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