

## WELCOME TO DYSCOVER



### WHAT IS APHASIA?

Aphasia is a neurological condition which affects a person's ability to find words, construct sentences, and to understand language, both spoken and written.

Aphasia ranges from mild to severe and can be a long-term condition, which impacts whole families.

Aphasia is isolating, frustrating and is usually acquired without warning, most often through stroke, but can also be caused by brain injury, or be associated with a rare dementia called Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA).

### WHAT IS DYSCOVER?

Dyscover was established as a charity in 1994, to provide long-term support and opportunities to people with aphasia and their families.

We work to inform, support, and empower people with aphasia, and their families, to manage their communication disability and to re-engage with life. We create an aphasia-friendly community in which people feel included, valued, and have a sense of purpose.



## HOW DOES DYSCOVER AIM TO HELP PEOPLE WITH APHASIA?

We offer structured, therapeutic group sessions to over 100 adults with aphasia each week, in person at **Leatherhead and Kingston, and online**, using Zoom. More people with aphasia, and their families, are supported through information and advice calls, short courses, extra activities sessions and other therapy support. Our core services for people with aphasia after stroke are described below.

### OUR GROUPS

Members usually attend a group, once a week. Groups run on a termly basis. Our Speech and Language Therapists will recommend the type of group to suit the individual's current needs. We cater for people with all types and severity of aphasia, and at different stages of recovery, from a few months after stroke, to many years. Our support is long term, as long as people need it. Different types of service cater for peoples' changing needs. Our distinct programmes are described below:

**'Foundation' groups and services** help people who have recently acquired aphasia, or those who need further help to adjust to, and live with their disability. We offer a high level of emotional and family support and provide a structured programme with individualised goals. Our Speech and Language Therapists may offer Conversation Partner Training courses for couples, as part of our Foundation service. These structured sessions aim to resource both parties with techniques and strategies to improve the success and enjoyment of day-to-day communication and conversation

**'Extend'** groups suit people who are successfully using a range of communication skills and who have gained confidence. Activities are more member led; there is more emphasis on self-support and providing greater challenges and responsibility to promote independence.

**'Explore'** groups are short term groups with a particular focus, bringing together people with aphasia who have similar interests and goals, such as returning to work or volunteering.

**'Sustain'** groups are designed for those who have become more accustomed to living with aphasia, but still need help and encouragement to use their communication skills within a supportive environment. These groups often provide an important sense of community and long-term support for members and their relatives.

### **'Challenge'**

In addition to our core service, we offer a wide range of additional group activities, courses and one-off special interest days. We encourage and support members to take up new opportunities and challenges to boost their confidence and aid their progress towards a more participative and purposeful life.

Past activities have included golf, swimming, gardening, music, art and photography.

## DYSCOVER ONLINE

We successfully transferred our models of support online during the pandemic and now continue to offer this online service as well as our face-to-face groups. We intend on expanding our online groups soon, which means where you live is no-longer an access barrier to our specialist support.



## DYSCOVER SERVICES FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH PRIMARY PROGRESSIVE APHASIA

A gradual loss of language ability can be the first symptom of a rare type of dementia called Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA), which is caused by changes to the frontotemporal lobes of the brain. More information about PPA can be found at [www.raredementiasupport.org](http://www.raredementiasupport.org) Dyscover has offered specialist support services for PPA since 2015 and is recognised as a leader within this field.

Couples are helped to manage this progressive condition through early-stage workshops, and as the condition progresses, through Conversation Partner Training courses, which equip partners with functional conversation strategies. We see most of our PPA members online but may offer face to face support for those who can travel to our Leatherhead base.

Our PPA service continues to develop and evolve; please enquire for details of our current offering.



## HELP FOR FAMILIES OF PEOPLE WITH APHASIA

Both stroke and the onset of a progressive aphasia are traumatic events which impact whole families, and the primary carer, in particular.

Aphasia compounds the difficulty since it is often impossible for couples to talk through the changes that have occurred. Frustration and stress are commonplace. With the right support however, the partners of people with aphasia can play a significant role in the recovery and adjustment process.

At Dyscover we support families along their journey of adjustment with a range of support opportunities and services, including Conversation Partner Training courses, termly meetings led by a Speech and Language Therapist, as well as occasional social events and outings. Partners value the respite that our weekly groups offer and can always approach staff in person or by email with any questions or concerns.

“ **Our members say:**

‘Dyscover saved my sanity.’

‘Being with people who understand aphasia is what will help me.’

‘It gives me hope that the future is positive.’

**Relatives say:**

‘Dyscover specialises in communication solutions.’

‘Dyscover is a friendly environment with the benefit of professional support.’ ”

## TRAINING AND RAISING AWARENESS WITH OUR APHASIA AMBASSADORS

9 out of 10 people don't know what Aphasia is.

We hope by raising awareness of aphasia and equipping others to provide the right sort of support, we will make life easier for people with this disability.

Dyscover members who wish to play a role in our regular teaching and awareness raising sessions can become Aphasia Ambassadors. Ambassadors have lived experience of aphasia and so are uniquely placed to explain about the condition and its impact on everyday life.

Ambassadors and staff have delivered presentations & training in educational settings to practicing and student Speech and Language Therapists and other health professionals, as well as to community organisations such as Rotary, WI, Scouts, and golf clubs.

## **OUR STAFF and TRUSTEES**

Dyscover has a small part-time staff team (FTE 4.5), which include 3 Specialist Speech and Language Therapists, and 3 Speech and Language Therapy Assistants. The organisation is jointly led by Service Manager, Julie Samuel and Director of Business, Alice Owen. Governance is provided by our Board of Trustees, who are all volunteers from a variety of Business, Finance, HR and Health backgrounds.

Visit [www.dyscover.org.uk](http://www.dyscover.org.uk) 'Meet the Team' to see our staff and trustee team.

Our staff are supported by team of trained and dedicated volunteers who help deliver our groups, courses and activities, as well as taking on admin, fundraising and marketing roles.

## **FUNDING**

We ask members to contribute towards the groups, courses and extra activities sessions they attend. This helps meet the costs of running the organisation. All members pay an annual subscription of £18 which entitles them to vote at the AGM and receive a termly newsletter. Members attending groups are invoiced termly, in advance. Fees are heavily subsidised and are currently approx. £20 per session. Members in genuine financial hardship are considered on a case-by-case basis. Courses and extra activities are charged separately.

The majority of our income comes from a variety of one-off grants from Charitable grants. We rely on community fundraising events, donations from individuals and local organisations for another third of our funds. Dyscover receives no NHS or other government funding.

Dyscover's latest Annual Report and Accounts can be accessed at [www.dyscover.org.uk](http://www.dyscover.org.uk)

## **TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT DYSCOVER**

- Call us on 01737 819419 or Email [info@dyscover.org.uk](mailto:info@dyscover.org.uk)
- Visit our website [www.dyscover.org.uk](http://www.dyscover.org.uk)
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