July 2026

NEWSLETTER

Keeping you up to date with News and Events

dyscover
specialist aphasia support

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE 1994 - 2024

Dyscover Moved Home!



Dyscover is now located in brand new premises at Fairmount House on Bull Hill in Leatherhead.

Following the sad news that the **Queen Elizabeth Foundation** (QEF) was entering administration and Leatherhead Court would close at the end of 2025, Dyscover acted quickly to **find a new home**. We moved to **Fairmount House** on Bull Hill, close to central Leatherhead and our former site, helping to **minimise disruption** for members and volunteers.

Our first group sessions took place successfully in mid-February, and everyone has now settled in well. This positive move was made possible by **the dedication of the Dyscover team**, particularly trustee **Rob Chorley** and Head of Service **Julie Samuel**, who led the relocation.

Save the Dates!

1. **Online Visitor Session**, 2-3pm on 12th November (Thursday)
- Meet **Julie** and our **ambassadors** to learn more about what Dyscover offers to people with aphasia

2. **PPA Online Visitor Session**, 10.30-11.30am, 16th September
- Meet **Rosemary** to learn more about what the team does for people living with PPA

3. **Living with Aphasia Conference,** 18th-19th April, University of Warwick



Contact **Rosemary** for more details**:**
rtownsend@dyscover.org.uk



Dyscover Joins Aphasia Charities in Parliament

June was **Aphasia Awareness Month** and on the 17th June, Dyscover joined three other specialist charities, **Aphasia Support**, **Aphasia Re-Connect,** and **Say Aphasia**, speaking to **MPs** to highlight the challenges of aphasia and the difficulties accessing **long-term support** for people with the condition. We spoke with one united voice and delivered a strong message.

Visit our website dyscover.org.uk or contact us for details and enquiries. **Follow us on social media**: search for Dyscover on Facebook, @dyscoveraphasia, @DyscoverAphasia, and @dyscoveraphasiacharity

Long-term support and opportunities for people with aphasia

Service and Staff Updates

Re-structuring

Financial pressures last year meant Dyscover had to **say goodbye to several valued colleagues**, including two Specialist Speech and Language Therapists. We therefore **reorganised our services** while also moving to home working and relocating our Leatherhead groups.

Our experienced **Speech and Language Therapy Assistants** now lead the groups, supported by **volunteers** and regular input from the **Lead Speech and Language Therapist**. Despite these changes, our face-to-face and online groups remain well attended. We continue to optimise our services and look forward to running four summer workshops for people with aphasia and their families.

Farewell to Maggie, Emma, and Jane

A huge thank you to the following members of staff who Dyscover sadly said goodbye to this year:



Emma Hubbard joined Dyscover in 2025 as a **Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist**. She led online and face-to-face groups, supervised students, and supported the relatives project. We are grateful that she continues to cover groups during annual leave and **support Rosemary with PPA projects**.

*"My personal thanks to Emma for the **support guidance** and **expertise** she brought to the groups we worked together in, her **professionalism**, **knowledge,** and ongoing **sense of fun** and **boundless energy** was very special to be part of. Thank you Emma on behalf of the members and volunteers, we all miss you." Suzanne*



Maggie Stapleton joined Dyscover in 2022 as a **Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist**. She brought extensive **neurological experience**, **trained volunteers**, **supervised students,** and led groups in Kingston and Leatherhead. She continues to support volunteer training and provide group cover.

*"Maggie had a very **special rapport** with our members, which is always evident in the very warm welcome she receives when she returns to cover groups. Her **caring**, **thoughtful support** was valued by both members and volunteers alike, and she is much missed by all at Dyscover." Caroline*



Jane Durston first joined Dyscover as a volunteer before becoming **Assistant Administrator** in 2022. She supported the office team with **warmth**, **flexibility,** and **enthusiasm**. Jane has now moved to Norfolk to begin a new chapter.

*"Jane has been a **valued and important member** of the team, willing to do whatever it took to support the team and members and always with a broad smile. We are already missing the **delicious cakes** Jane used to bring to the office." Shirley*

Groups in Action (Service Team)

How Our Groups Work

Our sessions comprise **facilitated group conversations** and carefully prepared **weekly topics**, supported by **aphasia-friendly resources**. Members take part in **structured breakout groups** led by trained volunteers and experienced speech and language therapy assistants, giving everyone **optimal opportunities to communicate**. We then pause for a coffee break and friendly chats.









Spaghetti Tower Challenge





The **Wednesday Group** took part in a fun team challenge to build towers using only **spaghetti** and **marshmallows**. Led by members **Paul** and **David**, the group worked in teams to develop **communication**, **teamwork**, and **problem-solving** skills while testing l**eadership** and **creativity**.

Member Talks



Several members recently gave talks to their groups, **sharing their knowledge and experiences** on subjects ranging from the “Soil”, Stradivarius violin, BBC video editing, Van Gogh and Tanzania, to the fall of Communism and wildlife in Kruger National Park. It was wonderful to see their **confidence grow** and to celebrate the **remarkable range of expertise** among our members.

Sue’s Summer Flowers Session





Thursday morning members were delighted to receive a visit from Dyscover **volunteer Sue Edwards** in June, who brought in a **wonderful array of flowers from her own garden**. From garden favourites such roses and lilies to ferns and herbs, the members enjoyed **smelling and touching the plants** and sharing information on which ones they had in their own gardens. Sue and her team of volunteer gardeners **grew and nurtured the fantastic courtyard garden at QEF** which was much enjoyed by staff, volunteers, and members.

Around Dyscover

Volunteers' Week

On 22nd June, we held a **thank-you lunch** alongside our **mid-term meeting** to celebrate Volunteers' Week. It was a valuable chance to **reflect on the term** and r**ecognise the enormous contribution** of our volunteers.

Thank you to everyone who joined us, both in person and online. We also benefited from two excellent training sessions on **Emotional Changes Following a Stroke** and **First Aid**.



Hellos and Goodbyes

We are delighted to welcome three new volunteers:

- **Sobia** and **Hazel** – Tuesday morning Zoom group
- **Ritu** – Thursday morning Zoom group

We also say a fond farewell to **Sarah, Sam, Caitlin, Leshay,** and **Joanna**. Thank you for the time, care and commitment you have given to Dyscover. We wish you every success in your next adventures.

A special thank you goes to **Caitlin** for her creativity and dedication in the Social Media role. Her posts and photographs have helped showcase Dyscover's work and events.

We also recognise **Diana**, whose many years of volunteering and support have made a lasting contribution to the organisation.

Ashtead Village Day





Dyscover recently attended **Ashtead Village Day** to raise awareness of both the charity and aphasia. We had the pleasure of **meeting many local residents** who were keen to learn more about our conversation groups and the people we support.

A huge thank you to all the **volunteers** and **ambassadors** who joined us and helped make the day such a success. Despite the very warm and sunny weather, their enthusiasm and support **helped us engage with the community** and **spread awareness of aphasia**. We are incredibly grateful for their time and dedication.

Thank You, Volunteers!

Thank you to everyone who has helped at Dyscover events. Your time and support **make our events friendly, welcoming, and enjoyable**.

We need volunteers for future events, **would you like to help**?

Please contact **Shelley**, our Volunteer Coordinator:
info@dyscover.org.uk

PPA @ Dyscover

What is PPA?

Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA) is a form of dementia that begins with **gradual changes to speech and language**, rather than memory. It is different from aphasia after stroke, which begins suddenly. As PPA progresses, it may also **affect thinking**, **understanding**, **movement,** or **behaviour**. Specialist speech and language therapy can help people stay involved in conversations and everyday life.

A Growing Specialist Service

Dyscover is, to our knowledge, the only UK charity offering specialist speech and language therapy specifically for people living with PPA. **Referrals have doubled in two years**, and the service expects to receive more than 100 referrals this year.

Led by **Rosemary Townsend**, the team now includes **Barbara Greenwood** and **Emma Hubbard**. A grant from **The Hospital Saturday Fund** is helping Dyscover build the service further.

People with PPA and their partners can book **one-to-one assessment**, **advice,** and **therapy sessions** at Fairmount House or on Zoom. We also introduce people to others living with PPA, in small groups.

Why this matters!

Most NHS trusts do not provide ongoing speech and language therapy for people with PPA, despite evidence that communication support is needed. Dyscover is working to ensure that **people with PPA and their families are heard**, **supported,** and **connected**.



Michael spoke about living with PPA at Westminster.



Peer support is an important part of Dyscover's PPA service.

Connecting and Campaigning



1. **Connecting**: **Rosemary** is working with **local dementia organisations** so that people living with PPA can **find wider support**.



2. **Sharing expertise**: A **pilot session** was delivered to **dementia nurses** at **St George's Hospital**. With support from Surrey Community Action, Dyscover is also **developing training resources with people who have PPA**.



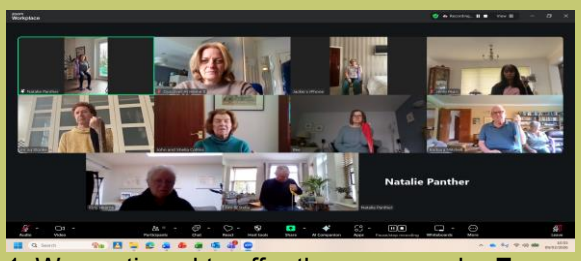
3. **Research**: Dyscover regularly contributes to PPA research. We **supported ten people** living with PPA to work with **UCL's Dr Chris Hardy** and **Artist Will Lindley** to create **Triptych**, an art installation **describing their experiences in words and pictures**.

Scan to watch Triptych →

4. **Campaigning**: **PPA Awareness Day**, led by **Rosemary** and **Dr Anna Volkmer of UCL**, expanded to webinars in eight countries this year. In addition, **Helen Maguire MP** invited Dyscover and 30 people affected by PPA to **Westminster** to explain why specialist therapy is needed. RCSLT supported the event.

Spring and Easter Highlights

Spring Term



1. We continued to offer the very popular **Zoom Pilates** run by **Natalie**. It offers **flexibility** and **strength exercises**, **social interaction**, and the convenience **of joining from home**, making it accessible to everyone.
2. We ran two **Aphasia Cafés** last term, one in **Teddington** and one in **Leatherhead**. In total 18 members met on three occasions for coffee and additional conversation.



4. Members had a wonderful time **painting plates and bowls** supported by **Pat** and **Bee** who are both very experienced volunteers who also enjoy Art.

Easter



3. **Companion Cycling** in **Bushy Park** in the beautiful sunshine. Always a favourite activity for our members, and this time members **Sarah** and **Paul** (waving) cycled together!



5. **Gymnastics and Movement** has remained a firm favourite since its launch with **Leatherhead and Dorking Gymnastics Club** in 2023. This Easter, members old and new tested their **balance**, **strength,** and **resilience** while having plenty of fun.



6. Volunteer **Steve** organised an exciting **Escape Room** challenge for nine Dyscover members, divided into three teams of three, each supported by a volunteer. The activity put a wide range of skills to the test, including **teamwork**, **innovation**, **problem-solving**, **analytical thinking**, **communication**, and even some **physical effort** to unlock each clue.



7. We were thrilled to welcome **Nicholas Owen** (former BBC and ITN Newsreader and Royal Correspondent) to Dyscover over Easter, to **share stories from his long career in the media**. Member **Mike** described Nick as a '**brilliant raconteur**' as he shared his interesting, amusing and sometimes controversial opinions about the **royals past and present**.



Ambassadors

Ambassador Group Review

The ambassador group continues to grow, now **incorporating around 40 members** (including many who continue as ambassadors after leaving Dyscover). Recently **five members have taken on ambassador challenges for the first time**. As well as **James**, **Patsy,** and **Rocky**, Thursday afternoon members **Andrew** and **David** helped SLT Maggie Stapleton deliver **Aphasia Awareness** training to 10 volunteers, from Dyscover and from another aphasia charity **TALK**. They enjoyed having conversations with the participants, enabling the volunteers to put into practise support strategies. All the new ambassadors found their experiences very valuable in helping to **boost their confidence** and **practise their communication skills**.



City University Service User Session



In June, ambassadors **Nial**, **Patsy,** and **Rocky** delivered talks to a lecture hall of speech and language therapy students at **City University** about the challenges of their aphasia and what had helped them to improve. The students were fascinated to learn about **how aphasia had affected Rocky's languages** (before his stroke he spoke four languages), the **emotional impact** of aphasia as described by Patsy and the improvements Nial has made in his recovery, even years after his stroke. It was **a day of firsts**: the first time Rocky had travelled on a train since his stroke; and the first time Patsy and Rocky had given a talk since their strokes!





Rotary Group Talks

In 2025 Dyscover were kindly invited to have a stall at the **District South Rotary Conference** where our ambassadors were able to **chat to many rotarians**. As a result, in the spring this year, Dyscover ambassadors have given talks to three rotary groups: **James talked to Carshalton Rotary** (bravely taking on the challenge only a few months after joining Dyscover), **Barry met with Kingston Rotary,** and **Tim presented to Storrington & Pulborough Rotary**. The audiences were all very engaged and interested to hear of our ambassadors' experiences, **supporting Dyscover with donations**. We hope to attend this year's Rotary conference and reach out to even more Rotary groups.

Community Events – A Look Back

Celebrating our supporters, volunteers, and community in 2026



JANUARY London Winter Walk

Team Dyscover completed **111 miles along the Thames** over the weekend.

Our first time in the event **raised an amazing £10,759** for our specialist PPA service.

Thank you to everyone who walked, donated, and supported the team!

£10,759 raised



MARCH Bridge Masterclass & Spring Quiz Night

A fantastic Bridge Masterclass **led by Andrew Robson OBE**, **raising £2,300** followed by our popular Spring Quiz Night **adding over £800** with a full house of 10 teams attending. Thank you to everyone who supported and helped make the evening a great success!

Over £800 raised



APRIL London Marathon

Our **biggest-ever team** took on the London Marathon.

Thanks to all our runners, fundraisers, and supporters, we **raised an incredible £25,000** for Dyscover.

A truly unforgettable achievement – thank you!

£25,000 raised



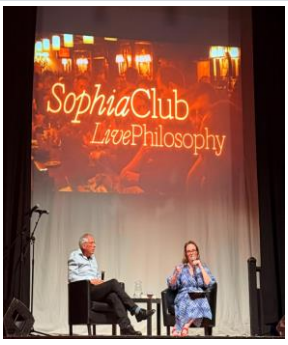
JUNE Dorking Tens

We attended the **Dorking Tens**, the **flagship event of DMVAC**.

Around **500 runners took part** in the 10-mile and 10km races.

As one of DMVAC's partner charities for 2026, **Dyscover will receive 20% of the event profits**.

Around 500 runners





Dyscover Up In Lights

Dyscover was **chosen as the charity partner** for a special **Sophia Club** event in London: '*Did language make us human?*' A **generous £5,200 donation** from the **Philia philanthropic foundation** (based in Melbourne) will directly support our core services. Thank you for helping **raise awareness of aphasia** and supporting our work.

£5,200 donated

Looking Ahead

- Join Team Dyscover for the Great South Run and London Marathon 2027.
- Exciting autumn and Christmas events, including Music Bingo and a special event with the Mole Valley Silver Band.

GET INVOLVED

We're always looking for new people to support future events. Whether you want to take on a challenge, fundraise, or join the Community Fundraising Committee, simply email **events@dyscover.org.uk** – we'd love to hear from you!