



Press Release - For Immediate Release

15<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**THE ROBIN TAVISTOCK AWARD 2021**  
**GILL JACKSON MBE and DYSCOVER**

The Trustees are delighted to announce that the joint recipients of **The Robin Tavistock Award 2021** are **Gill Jackson MBE** and **Dyscover**.



The Robin Tavistock Award is presented annually to an individual, or group, who is inspirational and who has made a significant contribution in the field of aphasia. This is only the second time a joint Award has been given.

Whilst working as a Speech and Language Therapist in the NHS, Gill Jackson recognised the need for long term support for people with aphasia. In 1994, she set up Dyscover which has grown over the years and now become a beacon of excellence in the aphasia world. It is almost impossible to pinpoint what makes Dyscover so special, and so respected nationally and, increasingly, internationally, because there are so many qualities that stand out. Critically, both Gill and Dyscover always put the person with aphasia at the heart of all that they do, combining gold standard level of professionalism with compassion, kindness and practical help.

Above all, Dyscover is a member led charity, that fulfils its mission 'to help and empower people with aphasia, and all who support them, to manage their communication disability and re-engage with life'. Significantly, all their groups and programmes are led or overseen by Speech and Language Therapists, supported by trained volunteers and this explains why Dyscover is synonymous with the word excellence.

Dyscover has always prided itself in being responsive to changing needs. It has been no surprise therefore, that it has been able to adapt its services during this pandemic, quickly moving its support and programmes online.

None of the above would have been possible without Gill's exceptional leadership. Her incisive strategic mind, rooted in kindness and integrity, has shaped how Dyscover developed. Everything Gill does is done with enthusiasm, sensitivity and generosity. Gill is also known to be self-effacing, never putting herself centre stage. It is, perhaps, this uncommon quality that has enabled her to do that which is so rare, and that is successfully hand over the leadership, to the very able Rosemary Townsend, thus ensuring a bright future for Dyscover and those whom it serves. They are fortunate indeed that she remains as President and that she continues to support Dyscover's remarkable work, both as a volunteer and mentor.



The Tavistock Trust for Aphasia's criteria for this Award are 'inspirational' and 'making a significant difference' and this fits both Gill Jackson and Dyscover perfectly.

**Ends**

## **Additional information:**

### **Aphasia**

- is a complex communication difficulty that is sometimes known as dysphasia. It can be caused by a stroke, a tumour, a car accident, a blow to the brain or by a progressive neurological illness – anything that damages the 'communication centre' in the brain. It is different for each person.
- People with aphasia can find it hard to speak, read, write, understand language and use numbers – or a combination of any of these. However, intelligence is not affected.
- At least 400,000 people in the UK have aphasia.

### **Gill Jackson MBE**

- Gill qualified as a Speech and Language Therapist in 1965, already with a special interest in aphasia.
- After a short time at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle, Gill settled in Surrey where she worked in hospital, rehabilitation and community settings, frequently developing and managing new services.
- In 1994 Gill founded Dyscover in order to offer long term support to people with aphasia.
- In 2003 Gill was awarded Honours of the RCSLT and in 2008 she received a MBE.

### **Dyscover**

- is a specialist charity, led by Speech and Language Therapists, which offers a unique stepped programme of long term support for people with aphasia and their families.
- Individuals with aphasia are supported through therapeutic groups and courses, aimed at maximizing recovery, adjustment and participation.
- Services are offered both from the charity's centres in Surrey (Leatherhead and Kingston) and online.
- The charity receives no statutory funding. They are proactive in seeking partnerships with local or national organisations.

***For further information about Dyscover, please visit Dyscover's website:***

<https://dyscover.org.uk/> or contact [info@dyscover.org.uk](mailto:info@dyscover.org.uk) or by telephone: 01737 819419

### **The Tavistock Trust for Aphasia**

- is the only grant-making trust in Europe that focuses solely on aphasia. The Tavistock Trust for Aphasia works to improve the quality of life for those with aphasia, their families and carers.
- We do this by, amongst other things, funding pioneering research and projects, as well as raise the profile and understanding of aphasia nationally and internationally.



- Robin Tavistock, later the 14<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford, had a brain haemorrhage in 1988 which left him with aphasia (communication disability). Robin founded the Trust to ensure that more people could have access to the quality of treatment he received.

*For further information, please visit the TTA's website: <https://aphasiatavistocktrust.org> or contact the Administrator at [tta@tavistocktrustaphasia.org](mailto:tta@tavistocktrustaphasia.org) or by telephone on 01525 290 002*