

Mental health handbook The Decider wins 25th anniversary special award

INSURANCE CORPORATION celebrated 25 years of sponsoring its healthcare bursary yesterday with a special lifetime award.

The prize was awarded to cognitive behavioural psychotherapists Michelle Ayres and Carol Vivyan, who won the bursary in 2010 for their proposal to encourage a more proactive approach to mental health problems and skills-based learning.

They have since been widely commended for their mental health handbook, *The Decider*, winning the British Journal of Nursing Mental Health Nurses of the Year award in 2015, while their techniques have been adopted in mental health institutions across the UK.

Ms Ayres said it was an honour to have had their work and careers recognised by this one-off award.

'We feel very privileged to be part of this fantastic initiative,' she said.

'When we first started it was just a local thing, but now we have done training all over the world,' she said.

'It is about providing skills-based learning that will help people to lead



Michelle Ayres, left, and Carol Vivyan, the 2010 winners with their mental health handbook, *The Decider*, are pictured with the special award given to mark the bursary's 25th anniversary. (16609515)

less-impulsive lives.'

Mrs Vivyan said the bursary had allowed them wider exposure for their ideas, which include learning skills

to manage mental health problems before they emerge.

'The bursary really kick-started everything. We have done so much in

the last six years,' she said.

'We wanted to create effective tools to help people cope with mental health problems and take a more proactive approach to mental health.'

Peter Walpole, chairman of Insurance Corporation and founder of the bursary, said a wealth of good ideas over the years meant the bursary was a vital outlet for Health & Social Care staff.

'In the early days I thought it might peter out due to a lack of new ideas,' he said.

'On the contrary, it has gone from strength to strength and has become woven into our healthcare arena in the island.

'It is a great privilege to have been involved and to have sponsored such a wonderful array of individuals over the last 25 years and we felt that commitment over a quarter of a century was worth extra celebration.'

Health & Social Care president Heidi Soulsby credited the bursary with empowering staff 'who are in the system every day and see where changes can make a real difference'.