

PRESS RELEASE

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**LEONARD CHESHIRE STATEMENT ON ANNOUNCEMENT OF
DWP'S INCAPACITY BENEFIT REFORMS**

Commenting on the Department for Work and Pension's Five Year Strategy, *Opportunity and Security Throughout Life*, John Knight, head of policy at disability charity Leonard Cheshire said:

"Today's proposals put a great deal of emphasis on the initial capability assessments and the personalised support that disabled people will receive. We will need to hear much more detail about how this will work in practice – staff must be fully trained to be able to deal with the complex new demands that will be placed on them.

"We also need the Government to confirm that there is no intention to tighten the gateway on to IB. The current medical assessments are extremely stringent and the new procedure must not be used to try and turf people off IB who are desperately in need of support.

"If the new proposals are implemented with sensitivity to the individual then there is much that will be welcomed in today's announcement. The system needs to be able to deal with the complexities of disability such as fluctuating and progressive conditions – a "one size fits all" approach would have the potential to be very damaging for disabled people."