

**RAIL ACCESSIBILITY – END DATE MUST BE ENFORCED**

Responding to the Government's announcement today of a preferred end date of 2020 by which time the rail network must be made fully accessible to disabled people, John Knight, head of policy at disability charity Leonard Cheshire, said:

"2020 is later than we would have liked but the key now is to ensure that these regulations are properly enforced. It is a relief to actually have a date after years of discussion and prevarication.

"Some elements in the rail industry have already hinted that they could simply ignore the regulations – they must be told that disabled people and the Government will not let this happen. 16 years is long enough to wait."

Leonard Cheshire's 'All Aboard!' campaign proposed an end date of 2017 which was backed by the Joint Committee that looked into the Disability Discrimination Bill and was also supported by 145 MPs who signed a Parliamentary motion supporting the campaign.

**--ENDS--**

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**Notes to Editors:**

1. Today's announcement came in a Written Ministerial Statement from transport minister Charlotte Atkins MP. More details can be found at: <http://www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=137073&NewsAreaID=2>

2. More details on the Disability Discrimination Bill can be found at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200405/ldbills/006/2005006.htm>
3. More details of Leonard Cheshire's 'All Aboard!' campaign can be found at: <http://campaigns.leonard-cheshire.org/campaign.php/00004.html>
4. Leonard Cheshire ([www.leonard-cheshire.org](http://www.leonard-cheshire.org)) is the UK's largest voluntary sector provider of support to disabled people. It supports over 21,000 disabled people in the UK (85% in own homes, 15% in care homes) offering flexible services to meet their needs. The charity campaigns for the rights of disabled people in the UK and raises awareness of the issues affecting them. The charity also works with disabled people in 57 countries worldwide working in partnership with more than 255 autonomous and locally managed services and organisations.

Leonard Cheshire offers care at home services; care homes with and without nursing, including respite care; day services including resource centres and mobile day centres; independent/supported living units; acquired brain injury rehabilitation services; recreational services and education, training and employment support through Workability and jobability.com.