

### **Disabled people left behind this holiday season**

On one of the busiest travel weekends in the year research by disability charity Leonard Cheshire has revealed that inaccessible transport excludes many disabled people from the UK's big holiday get away.

Figures produced by the charity reveal that nearly two thirds of disabled people find travel by air, ferry or rail difficult or do not even attempt to use these means of transport.

The Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) predict that this weekend is likely to be the second busiest holiday weekend of the year, after the first week of the school holidays, with nearly two million Britons picking from the vast array of holiday destinations at home and abroad.

But Leonard Cheshire's research found that of those disabled people who had taken a recent holiday around a quarter found that inaccessible transport had restricted their choice of destinations, with the figure rising to over 40 per cent for wheelchair users.

"Inaccessible transport is one of the biggest obstacles in disabled people's lives. As a result holidays can be a no go area," said Jo Campion, policy manager at Leonard Cheshire.

"Trains and buses are all too often inaccessible, which can make it difficult for those without their own cars to get to an airport or a ferry. Even if you do reach the airport there are still cases where groups of

disabled people have been thrown off transport because staff are not trained to work with them.”

Even the chairman of Leonard Cheshire, Charles Morland, who is a wheelchair user, recently found himself stranded on a plane for two hours whilst waiting for the appropriate equipment to become available to enable him to exit the plane.

Current disability discrimination legislation excludes planes and ferries and the Government has yet to set a date by when trains must be made accessible to disabled people.

“Many millions of people are taking a much needed break away this weekend,” Jo Campion said. “Most people rightly take this for granted, but until transport becomes fully and reliably accessible then it will continue to be just a dream for many disabled people.”

**--ENDS--**

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Personal stories are available on request and Jo Campion is available for interviews.

#### Notes to Editors:

1. Disability charity Leonard Cheshire has produced several reports on the inaccessibility of transport in recent years, including the “Mind the Gap” social exclusion report and the “All Aboard!” campaign calling for an early end-date for the rail network to be made fully accessible. Copies of these reports can be found at: <http://www.leonard-cheshire.org/campaigning/campaigns.php>
2. 501 disabled people were surveyed for this research. A questionnaire with accompanying briefing notes was circulated by The Grass Roots Group on Leonard Cheshire’s behalf. The sample was drawn from their own panel of disabled people, which has circa 2,500 people from all parts of the UK including

Northern Ireland. Questionnaires were mailed and also posted onto the Internet for direct web capture. Respondents were paid a small fee.

3. The research found that 66% of those surveyed found travel by ferry difficult or never used it; 62% of those surveyed found air travel difficult or never used it; 60% of those surveyed found rail travel difficult or never used it. It also found that 24% of those who had taken a recent holiday had found that their choice of destination had been restricted by poor transport, rising to 43% for wheelchair users.
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.