

HUNTING HOUNDS OR DISABLED PEOPLE?

- GOVERNMENT PUTS DISABLED PEOPLE SECOND

Leonard Cheshire is disappointed that there was no Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Bill contained in today's Queen's Speech. It is appalled that the Government regards banning hunting with hounds as a higher priority than addressing disabled peoples continuing discrimination and social exclusion.

Despite the considerable progress made by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, many disabled people continue to experience discrimination on a daily basis. There are unacceptable gaps within the Act, notably affecting public transport, and the amendments identified by the Disability Rights Taskforce in 1999 are desperately needed. Full enforceable civil rights were and remain a Government manifesto commitment. After five years in office the Government has failed to deliver this commitment to disabled people. As a result, a largely inaccessible transport network will continue to exclude many disabled people from society.

John Knight, head of external policy commented, "This piecemeal approach the Government seems to be suggesting, to address disabled peoples discrimination, will not give disability rights the status and effectiveness it needs.

Knight continued, "An uncoordinated dispersal of legislative measures could also make it difficult for people to understand what rights they have under any new disability discrimination legislation and create unnecessary delays in delivering effective legislation. Leonard Cheshire calls on the Government to honour its manifesto promise of 1997 and 2001 to deliver comprehensive and enforceable civil rights for disabled people without any further delay.

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About Leonard Cheshire (www.leonard-cheshire.org):

Leonard Cheshire is the UK's leading voluntary sector provider of support services for disabled people. We support over 19,000 disabled people in the UK, offering flexible services to meet a wide range of needs.