

# Ability

For the supporters of Leonard Cheshire

Summer 2021

## Discovering the possibilities with disability

Read on page 8 how  
your support has given  
Jane the chance to  
live as independently  
as she chooses

Leonard  
Cheshire



# A new hello

**The limitations created by lockdown are experiences that many disabled people live through most of the time. Isolation, not being able to access places, not being able to do things with friends and family – for many disabled people this is not just the story of the past 18 months, it is simply our day-to-day life.**

The theme of this edition of *Ability* is 'Possibility with Disability'. You can read on page 6 how we moved many of our projects online to ensure disabled people were not left isolated during the pandemic. And on page 8, you can meet Jane, from Uganda – just one of the people you've helped to earn a living and support her family.

I passionately believe there are no limits to possibilities for disabled people. I am incredibly proud of how our volunteers and staff continue to rise to these challenging times and provide outstanding support to disabled people and their families. None of this is possible without you, our wonderful supporters. Together, we believe that there is possibility with disability.

**Thank you.**



**Dr Ruth Owen OBE**  
Chief Executive



# Interview between **Ruth and Kat**



**New CEO of Leonard Cheshire, Ruth Owen OBE, was interviewed by Kat Watkins, disability rights campaigner and long term supporter of Leonard Cheshire.**

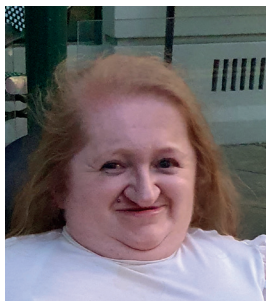
“

**What do you think sets Leonard Cheshire apart from other disability charities?**

Well, our amazing work! For a start we do some fantastic work across the UK, but I think what really does set us apart is our global presence. It doesn't matter where you are in the world, we support disabled people and that's what I think is really unique about Leonard Cheshire.

”

*continued on page 4*



**When you're not busy leading Leonard Cheshire to greatness, what keeps you occupied?**

Well before the pandemic my partner Terry and I were big travellers. At the moment we do try and go out as much as possible. We live in central London, and I've got a little electric scooter that I attached to my lightweight manual chair. We go on our walks all around London, so that keeps me occupied before things start to open up.

**With your love of travel, do you think the UK is good about accommodation for disabled people? Or do you think that more needs to be done?**

Definitely more needs to be done. There's nothing greater than the British Isles for holiday, but accessibility still has a long way to go.

I've always found inaccessible travel so frustrating because it isn't that difficult to get it right!

Rather than steps how about a lift that works? Can you make a door slightly wider so it fits a wheelchair? Why only have two accessible holiday cabins out of 50?

**How do you see disabled people working together and what kind of change do you think this could bring?**

I think disabled people show huge levels of resilience. Prioritisation, adapting and managing their lives, constant logistical skills – and that's just on a daily basis!

You think about all those skills, how could they be translated into the world of work? And you think about if we pulled all those skills together, how could we change the world? We could, couldn't we?

**What focus should Leonard Cheshire and its activists – across all the nations – lobby the government for next?**

It's got to be led by disabled people and what they really want – I think that's super important.

Disability strategy is really important and I really want to



see the world be much more inclusive. It's not about just having a ramp on a building. I'm talking about showing people like me and you and many other disabled people that actually the world is open and allows us to lead the lives that we want to lead.

I think the world makes us quite disabled and I think how nice would it be if that wasn't the case?

### **What do you hope the pandemic will teach others about disabled people?**

To recognise that the limitations created by the pandemic is actually a world that many disabled people live in, most of the time.

Things like isolation, not being able to access something with their friends. For a lot of disabled people that was their day-to-day life pre-pandemic.

So I'm hoping that our non-disabled peers will get feisty about the things that are still not accessible to disabled people.

### **Finally, a fun one! Most wheelchair users have had a favourite wheelchair, what was your favourite?**

The one I'm in now. I'm in a super duper lightweight manual chair. I've been able to put an electric gadget on the front that turns it into a little scooter.

This has given me the most independence I've ever had in my life. I've been to parks and other areas where I live that I've never been to before because they weren't accessible. Now I can, so I've seen parts of my local community that I've never experienced before.



To watch the interview, or read some additional questions, please visit [leonardcheshire.org/ability21](https://leonardcheshire.org/ability21)

# “Being back in touch is brilliant”



**Cathy felt cut off when Covid-19 shut down her weekly club. But Leonard Cheshire provided a vital lifeline.**

Back in March 2020, Cathy's weekly routine was turned upside down. For years she looked forward to spending quality time with friends at Weekday Wow Factor: a club hosting daytime discos and activities for older people. But when Covid-19 forced the club online, she was devastated. With no access to technology, Cathy initially had to stop taking part altogether.

Exercise and socialising have been important to Cathy since her heart attack and stroke. Not being able to see friends,

chat about her day or have a dance meant she felt even more isolated over lockdown.

However, thanks to support from people like you, our Go Digital team were able to give Cathy, and others without access to technology, an iPad, as well as the online training and the support needed to use it.

Initially, Cathy was reluctant, having never used technology before. But after a bit of encouragement from other members, she realised she had nothing to lose and got stuck in. Eventually, she was able to get online and start classes again.

Being able to take part in club activities isn't the only benefit



**During the pandemic, your support has meant 195 people were able to access equipment and enjoy the benefits of getting online and learning digital skills at their own home and at their own pace.**

Cathy catches up with her friend on her “phenomenal” iPad.

that access to technology has given Cathy. It's also allowed her to keep in touch with family and even use Facebook to reconnect with lost friends and relatives. At a time when face-to-face contact has been limited, even more so for disabled people, these connections are invaluable.

She said: **“Being back in touch is brilliant. The iPad is phenomenal, and I can't imagine being without it. My family is over the moon. I'm on Facebook first thing in the morning. I knew nothing about technology and never**

**thought I'd learn. It takes patience, but if I can learn, anyone can.”**

Cathy is thrilled she's now able to use technology to get online and wants to learn even more so she can continue to connect with loved ones.

Go Digital ensures disabled people have access to technology through specialised equipment and training at a time when it's needed most. But without your continued support, much of this wouldn't be possible, so thank you from us and Cathy.

**For more information on the support provided by Leonard Cheshire during the pandemic, go to [leonardcheshire.org](https://leonardcheshire.org)**

# Turning

**Jane is 20 years old and lives in Uganda. She had to leave school at a young age because of epilepsy.**

Her friends and teachers didn't understand how to support her disability at school and would often tease her, making her feel isolated. Without a proper education and few life skills, Jane spent years working as a vegetable seller, earning little money.

However, in 2019 she joined our Access to Livelihoods project. It gives young disabled women in Uganda the skills and support they need to work. Through the project, Jane trained in barbering and beauty at a local salon and learnt about business management, marketing and record keeping.

Jane trimming her client's hair. She would love to own a unisex salon.

**Your support means that over 58,000 disabled people are now in paid or self-employment in Africa and Asia.**



# skills into profit



Jane purchased hairstyle charts for her salon.

She was given a start-up kit for her new business, which included some basic electricals and beauty supplies. Alongside this, Jane was also able to get a health assessment and ongoing support for her epilepsy, and now has access to the medication she needs.

Because of the continued support we receive from people like you, Jane now runs a thriving barber shop, which

has continued to grow since her training. She's saving money every month and has even saved enough to build a house.

She said: **“The holistic approach that Leonard Cheshire took in my training has made me appreciate the value of work and medication. If I had had access to these medicines earlier, I would have been able to complete my education.**

**“Though it is very much pointless to cry over the education I lost growing up. From those ashes, a beauty has risen. I am not only able to provide for myself and my family, but also build my own house.”**

It's continued support from people like you that means we're able to give disabled women and girls, like Jane, the skills they need to live as independently as they choose. Jane now hopes she can use her newfound skills to grow a successful goat farm and vegetable business too.



# Paying it forward

**Since the start of the pandemic, one in two disabled people have felt more isolated and alone than ever. Our skills development programme, Can Do, is one of the ways we've continued to empower disabled young people to learn new skills and stay connected.**

Despite tough income challenges created by the pandemic in 2020, we were still determined to run as many of our Can Do projects as we could. Gifts in wills, from people like you, made this possible.

In Wales, Can Do enabled disabled young people at a local school to develop their social and life skills through working with the community. The Can Doers, along with Project Coordinator Mikaela, shared

ideas on how they could help out during a difficult time.

They came up with the idea to create care packages for those most affected by the pandemic. This included local NHS workers and homeless people supported by the charity Souper Sunday.

Students were provided with everything needed to create colourful bags filled with mask extenders and self-care treats. They also created Christmas boxes for Souper Sunday, filled with useful items like sanitiser, toothpaste and gloves. Some of the young people learnt to use a sewing machine for the first time too, which really boosted their confidence.

The programme even inspired one student to make another 50 Christmas boxes with her siblings and they generously used their own birthday money to fill them.

Rhiannon and Dylan told us how it felt to be a part of Can Do.

**Gifts in wills, large and small, are building a better world for disabled people, both in the UK and internationally.**



**Dylan**



**Rhiannon**

Can Do gave Dylan some newfound skills. He said: **“It’s given me the confidence that I’ve never found myself. Just remember you can do anything. No matter your gender, age, race or disability.”**

Rhiannon said: **“I’m really proud that we all came together and helped others throughout a really tough time. When Covid has gone, I’m hoping to do nursing and get into the Red Robbins programme as a volunteer.”**

This project in Conwy wouldn’t have been possible without our supporters who left gifts in their wills. These gifts empower generations of disabled people to learn new skills and live as independently as they choose.

**To learn more about gifts in wills, simply tick the box on our response form or visit [leonardcheshire.org/legacies](https://leonardcheshire.org/legacies)**

# Thank you for your


**Our research showed that one in two disabled people felt isolated during lockdown. In response we launched our Messages of Hope campaign in the last edition of Ability.**

Your inspiring messages were shared across our social media channels, helping disabled people to feel supported and less isolated during lockdown.


We are so grateful for all of you who took the time to send a Message of Hope to show disabled people you care and that they are not alone. Thank you!

You can see all the Messages of Hope at [leonardcheshire.org/hope](https://leonardcheshire.org/hope), but here is a selection:


**"When the virus has gone every person in the world will understand something about isolation – and will therefore be kinder and happier to help others in the future."**



**"You are loved more than you know so embrace it! Enjoy the love! And love yourself!"**



**"I hope everyone is keeping safe during Covid and social distancing. And having your vaccines so you can see your family and friends."**





# Messages of Hope

**"You are in our thoughts and hearts. You are not alone."**

**"We are all going through a hard time and we are all in it together. Whatever you face, know you are not alone and someone else is facing the same problems. Stay as cool and great as you are."**

**"Don't lose hope. When the sun goes down, the stars come out. xx"**

**"As we warm into spring and the virus recedes, I hope kindness and care will flourish. You are all so brave and you are my inspiration! Carry on spreading your message, it will give hope to many. Cheers to you all!!"**

**"No matter how dark and difficult life seems there is always hope for tomorrow."**



# Words hurt

Mark Humphries, aka Kray-Z Legz, recently featured in Leonard Cheshire's 'Words Hurt' campaign, which had over 70,000 hits on our social media channels.

Mark is 32 and describes himself as wheelchair active, easy-going and lucky. He speaks to us from his Somerset home about his experiences as a disabled campaigner and musician.

As soon as I was asked to join the campaign I was on board. It's so important – language does matter, and sometimes you just want to have a conversation where you feel you can be yourself.

I think most disabled people have experienced some careless words thrown at them. It shows people's ignorance and that they don't understand what it's like to live with a disability. It can be exhausting.

I have experienced people using odd language myself – especially with my partner. People always presume she is my carer, and talk around me and about me, not to me. People make assumptions I can't understand them – many people look at me and say – “shall I speak slower?” I am easy-going and cheerful, but sometimes it's difficult.

Away from campaigning, I have been a musician all my life, and have been playing an instrument since I was a toddler. My poor mum – I started on the violin, then the drums, and am now writing my own music. I think music is one of the most unifying languages –

it's about creativity, and it's there for everyone. I want to do more – and help more young people get into music. I really want to have somewhere like Glastonbury, near where I live, to give disabled artists more of a platform – to show what we can achieve.

I can't wait to do more with Leonard Cheshire – I think it's so important disabled people have a voice. Sometimes you just want the conversation – you just want people to be comfortable and at ease with the unknown and not be seen as ‘other’. In the end we just want to be human.

We are delighted that Mark is joining Leonard Cheshire as an Ambassador! You'll be seeing (and hearing!) a lot more from him soon. In the meantime, have a look on the website for the latest news.

[www.leonardcheshire.org](http://www.leonardcheshire.org)



### 3. Or, if you'd prefer, please make a regular gift

I would like to make a regular gift of £ \_\_\_\_\_  
 monthly/ quarterly/ annually (delete as appropriate)  
 starting on the ☐ 1st or ☐ 16th of the next available month

#### Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Service user number

Reference Number (for office use only)

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#### Instruction to your Bank or Building Society:

Please pay Leonard Cheshire Disability Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with Leonard Cheshire Disability and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Name and full address of your Bank or Building Society

To The Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Account Holder(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Bank / Building Society Account Number

Branch Sort Code

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Please return to:

**Leonard Cheshire, 66 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL**

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

### 4. Make your gift worth more at no extra cost

If you're a UK taxpayer we can claim back 25p for every £1 you give, at no extra cost to you. Simply tick the box.

*giftaid it*

☐ Yes, I am a UK taxpayer and would like Leonard Cheshire to reclaim the tax through Gift Aid on all donations I have made in the last four years and any future donations until further notice. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

### 5. Gifts in wills information

☐ I would like more information on leaving a gift in my will.

**For more information please contact Donor Support on 03003 030074  
 or email [supporter@leonardcheshire.org](mailto:supporter@leonardcheshire.org)**



**Yes! I want to make a donation  
to support disabled people  
in the UK and internationally**



## 1. Your details

Name

Address

Post code

☐ Yes, please keep me updated by phone on this number

☐ Yes, please keep me updated by email at this email address

You can update or remove your personal details at any time by contacting us by email at [supporter@leonardcheshire.org](mailto:supporter@leonardcheshire.org) or by calling us on 0300 303 0074. For specific details on how we use your personal details, please read our full Privacy notice on [www.leonardcheshire.org/privacy-policy](http://www.leonardcheshire.org/privacy-policy).

## 2. Your one-off gift

Please accept my gift of £ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I enclose a cheque/postal order/ charity voucher (delete where applicable) made payable to: Leonard Cheshire Disability. If the card holder's address is different to the one above, please supply it.

**OR** please debit my:

☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ AMEX ☐ CAF Card ☐ Maestro

Card No:

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Start Date:

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Expiry Date:

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Issue No.

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(Maestro only)

(Maestro only)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Don't forget your Gift Aid declaration overleaf!**

# The London Marathon is back for 2022!

Join team Leonard Cheshire for a guaranteed place in one of the world's most famous races.

**Date:** 24 April 2022

**Registration fee:** £100

**Fundraising target:** £2,000

With more competition than ever in the ballot, sign up now to secure your place. Every step you take will help disabled people live, learn and earn as independently as they choose, whatever their ability.

For more information or to sign up, visit [leonardcheshire.org/londonmarathon](https://leonardcheshire.org/londonmarathon) or email [events@leonardcheshire.org](mailto:events@leonardcheshire.org).



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