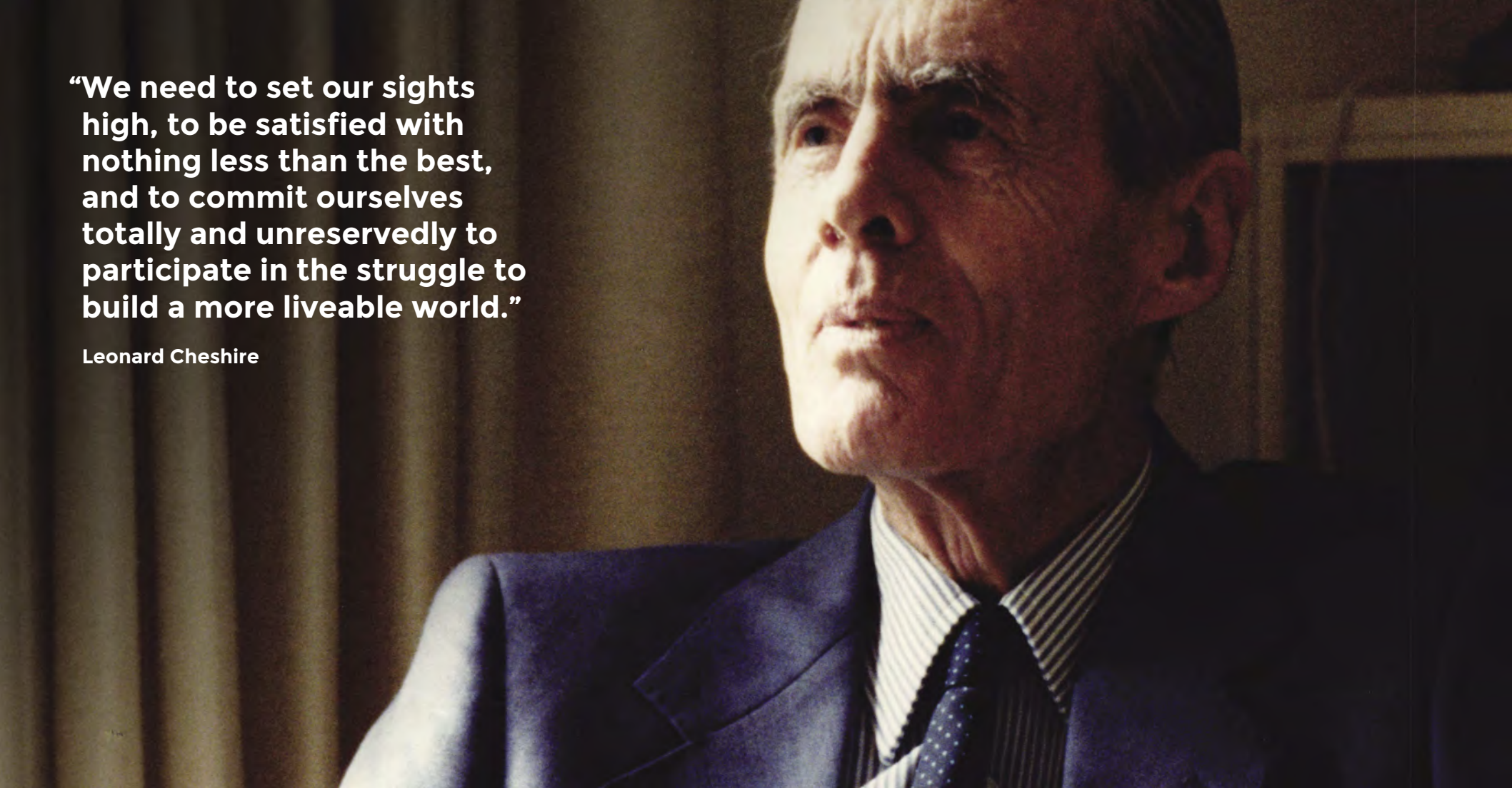


# THE PIONEER CIRCLE

Creating Possibility  
with Disability

Leonard  
Cheshire



A close-up, profile view of Leonard Cheshire, an elderly man with a serious expression, looking upwards and to the right. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a light-colored striped shirt, and a dark blue tie with white polka dots. The background is dark and out of focus.

**“We need to set our sights high, to be satisfied with nothing less than the best, and to commit ourselves totally and unreservedly to participate in the struggle to build a more liveable world.”**

**Leonard Cheshire**

Leonard Cheshire was one of the RAF's youngest commanding officers. Assigned to Bomber Command, his legendary war career included eight months leading No. 617 Squadron – the Dambusters. He became the most highly decorated bomber pilot when awarded the Victoria Cross in 1944.

At the end of the conflict, Leonard realised that he was one of the lucky ones. He had a desire to make the world a better place. Many ventures failed until he received a call from a local hospital in May 1948. An acquaintance of his was dying. Could he help?

Leonard took him home and began a lifetime of humanitarian work with disabled people. Leonard continued to fight injustice and work towards a society in which everyone is equally valued until his death in 1992.

**Leonard Cheshire is now the UK's leading pan disability charity.**

# FORWARD BY DR RUTH OWEN OBE



**Hello! I'm Ruth and I'm the new Chief Executive here at Leonard Cheshire. I am so thrilled to be joining this fantastic organisation and truly excited about the path that lies ahead.**

Leonard Cheshire – both the person and the charity – is very close to my heart. My mother was a nurse at a Leonard Cheshire service when I was growing up. Since then, I have watched on as the charity has grown and evolved into what it is today.

My number one priority is the disabled people we support. They are at the centre of everything we do. The Covid-19 pandemic has devastated so many people's lives in unimaginable ways, and disabled people have been among the hardest hit. Now more than ever, we need to work together to ensure disabled people are not left behind.

Every day, individuals struggle due to being 'disabled by society'. Leonard Cheshire is on a mission to support people with real life solutions, where disabled people can live, learn and earn in a fairer, more inclusive world.

That's why I am calling on you to join me as a member of Leonard Cheshire's new Pioneer Circle – a fantastic opportunity to support disabled people to take an active role in our recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our strength is in our values: we are positive, proud and pioneering. We felt that the Leonard Cheshire Pioneer Circle was the perfect name to encapsulate the spirit of like-minded individuals who come together to make a collective impact for good.

Together, we can unlock an inclusive world of 'possibility with disability'.

Come on the journey with me.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ruth Owen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Ruth" and "Owen" being larger and more prominent.

**Dr Ruth Owen OBE**

**Chief Executive**

**March 2021**



Debojit and his mother on the train to Digha, West Bengal

# IT'S TIME TO MAKE A CHANGE

## **Leonard Cheshire fights for a society where everyone can thrive.**

We reach over 75,000 people a year globally through care and independent living services, education, employment, digital inclusion, and skills development programmes. Leonard Cheshire partners with education providers, community and business leaders to champion inclusion and fight injustice.

Society is beginning to recognise the value and influence of disabled people; not only as cherished family and friends and trusted colleagues, but as innovators in industry, the arts, sport, and science – and as global leaders on the world stage.

And yet, disabled people continue to experience outdated societal barriers and attitudes. All too often with far reaching and damaging consequences.

Disabled people are more likely to be disadvantaged compared to non-disabled people in every area of their life, as a result of barriers to independent living, education, employment and other opportunities. Consequently, disabled people often experience higher levels of psychological distress, social isolation, lack of social care support, workplace discrimination, food poverty, and unequal access to health care.

It is estimated that disabled people represent at least 15 per cent of the world's population, or more than 1 billion individuals.

Isn't it about time everyone had a chance to shine?

**Please join our Pioneer Circle today and support disabled people to live, learn and earn and achieve their full potential.**

**We reach over 75,000 people a year globally through care and independent living services, education, employment, digital inclusion, and skills development programmes.**

# MISSION STATEMENT

**The Leonard Cheshire Pioneer Circle is a group of like-minded individuals who believe in the potential of everyone. Pioneers recognise talent and ability where others may only see the disability.**

**As far as we're concerned, disability means possibility.**

The Leonard Cheshire Pioneer Circle mission is to make a material difference to the lives of disabled people by responding to what they tell us they need. Right now.

Pioneers support disabled people to achieve their goals in the here and now, whilst, as an organisation, Leonard Cheshire continues to build, fund, and scale projects and programmes designed to permanently eradicate barriers to inclusion.

To help us do this, every year, members collectively and generously fund a **Leonard Cheshire Pioneer Circle Project** to enable disabled people to embark on a journey of possibility. As a pan disability charity, we value every individual we work with, ensuring our focus never wavers from providing the right support for everyone.

## Sound good?

Join our growing family of Pioneers making headway in creating a fairer world.

To be part of our unstoppable team, we ask Pioneers to make a minimum annual donation of £1,000.

You can choose to support our UK or International work, or both.

Together, we will create possibilities for every disabled member of society.



Kevin, Andy, Ashley, John, Mark and Jason, members of the Greenhill Grenadiers, during training for the Boccia National League and Super League Finals



Diversity and inclusion officer Derek Shimoli works from his office at Kenya Union of the Blind in Nairobi, a disabled people's organisation involved in Leonard Cheshire's Innovation to Inclusion (i2i) inclusive employment programme



# THE LEONARD CHESHIRE PIONEER CIRCLE PROJECT FOR 2021-22: EMERGING FROM COVID-19

**Without doubt, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on all our lives, affecting health, financial security and emotional wellbeing.**

We know from talking to the people we support how much disabled people are struggling.

Recent data from the Office of National Statistics suggests that disabled people's experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the harm done when they are denied the same opportunities as non-disabled people. Uncomfortable as it is to confront, discrimination – attitudinal, political and physical – may have played a part in why disabled people have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

**You have the opportunity – right now – to change that.**

Over the last few months, disabled people that Leonard Cheshire supports in our care services, assisted living accommodation and in the community have told us about their experiences.

- Disabled people are experiencing greater loneliness and isolation. Many people are scared about the future, and how they will cope; more than 7 in 10 disabled people have lost income, their jobs, or have been furloughed since March 2020, with young people particularly affected.
- Young disabled people are particularly anxious about becoming the 'lost Covid generation'. Already twice as likely as their non-disabled peers to not be in education, employment, or training by the time they reach 18, the Covid-19 pandemic is set to disenfranchise a generation of young disabled people at a time when youth unemployment is projected to be extremely high.
- Being online is extremely valuable to disabled people. Being connected is a lifeline to family and friends and essential for independent living. However, too many disabled people still don't have access to smart technologies that are inclusive of their needs. Lack of IT knowledge and digital skills is also a major issue. Just 54% of disabled people have access to a computer for personal use. Fewer than half have access to a smartphone.

# HOW PIONEERS CAN HELP

**As Pioneers, you are our rock. Your funds are used in the most important areas of our work. This might not always be headline grabbing, but without your help we would not be able to provide the best possible support for disabled people around the world.**

## **Pioneers support disabled people like Michelle.**

In 2019/20 we opened the first of our new social enterprises in the heart of Swansea. The Social Bean is a pioneering coffee shop with a difference, providing work and experience for disabled people. It is where Michelle got her first job.

“I first heard about Leonard Cheshire through their employment programme, Changing Futures, and the work they do in the communities in Swansea. I reached out in May 2019. At that point I had very low confidence and belief in myself: I did not think I had any chance of paid employment. I have experience with chronic depression and medically controlled schizophrenia, and this had been a barrier for me in gaining employment.

I lacked experience. My Changing Futures Coordinator Mark suggested I do some volunteering in the Leonard Cheshire IT suite at the CREST Centre. This gave me the opportunity to get some valuable experience working with customers. The programme also enabled me to enrol in an online Sign Language course. This was invaluable to me as it helped me to interact in a variety of ways with users of the IT suite.”

In November 2019, Mark encouraged Michelle to apply for a job at the Social Bean. Volunteering in the IT suite had provided Michelle with transferable skills and experience to draw on. Michelle was elated to get the job.

“When I look back on how far I have come, I am astounded at what I have been able to accomplish, and so proud.”

During the pandemic, Michelle also volunteered at one of our Welsh services as a gardener, adding to her repertoire of skills, and making new friends along the way.

## **Leonard Cheshire Pioneer Circle members don't fund things. They fund change.**

As Michelle's journey shows, we focus on three interconnected areas to support disabled people to achieve their goals: Live, Learn and Earn.

By increasing access to opportunities and improving the quality of the experience disabled people can realise their full potential.

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a black button-down shirt, is smiling warmly at the camera. She is in a coffee shop setting, standing behind a counter. In her right hand, she holds a stainless steel pitcher, and in her left hand, she holds a clear glass mug filled with a frothy coffee beverage. Behind her is a professional espresso machine with various knobs and levers. To the left, there are shelves with stacks of white and pink coffee mugs. The overall atmosphere is bright and professional.

Michelle working at the Social Bean

**“When I look back on how far I have come, I am astounded at what I have been able to accomplish, and so proud.”**

**Michelle**

# WHERE LEONARD CHESHIRE PIONEER CIRCLE FUNDS WILL GO

This year's Leonard Cheshire Pioneer Circle Project will deliver the support, tools and training disabled people need right now to alleviate the distress caused by the pandemic.





# THEORY OF CHANGE

You can help Leonard Cheshire solve dilemmas of access and opportunity, not only in the UK, but across Asia and Africa to support educational and economic inclusion. Here is an example of how your donations will work in action.



**“To be able to give people a boost in confidence, a sense of achievement, and show them something that is going to have a positive impact on their life moving forward – it is something I would always recommend.”**

**Digital Inclusion Volunteer**

**We take care of project management.**

David sources, orders and delivers Graham's IT equipment. They keep in touch using WhatsApp.

Mark introduces Graham to Janet, a 'virtual volunteer' and keen techie who works with Graham to set up his iPad, online accounts, download and use Apps like BBC Sounds, and shows him how to do online shopping and banking. They chat together on Zoom and FaceTime.

After a few weeks, Graham is confident enough to do his weekly food shop and buy things online. He uses Zoom to keep in touch with family and friends and is experimenting with Siri, a voice-controlled device.

**In time, Graham feels confident enough to mentor someone else. He volunteers with Leonard Cheshire to help others in his local support group.**

**We invest in volunteering programmes and disability awareness training for people like Janet who want to share their skills.**

# THE DIFFERENCE YOU'LL MAKE

**The difference that the Leonard Cheshire Pioneer Circle will make this year cannot alone be measured in income raised, numbers reached, or key outcomes met, although all those things are important.**

- We will measure impact by asking disabled people what support from Pioneers has meant to them.
- As a member of the Leonard Cheshire Pioneer Circle, you will get to know some of the people we support.
- Leonard Cheshire Pioneer Circle members are family. It's about listening and being there. It's about staying the distance with people you believe in.

**It's about what's possible with disability.**

## **Leonard Cheshire Pioneer Circle Project: Emerging from Covid-19**

### **Live**

For Eddie, to take part in Strictly Cymru, the only inclusive dance competition of its kind in Wales.

### **Learn**

For Sam, learning computer skills using specialist equipment through our digital inclusion programme.

### **Earn**

For Miriam, at home with her son in Nairobi, who has a job in customer care with support from one of our employment programmes.





Eddie



Miriam



Sam

# MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

**For an annual gift of £1,000 or more, you will enjoy:**

- An invitation to an exclusive annual Leonard Cheshire Pioneer Circle reception, hosted by a Pioneer Circle Patron with special guests. A perfect opportunity to meet up with fellow Pioneers, beneficiaries, and gain deeper insight into the significant contribution Pioneers are making. The event will be live-streamed and recorded, so no matter where you are, or what you are up to, you will never miss it.
- Priority booking on ticketed events and invitations to other Leonard Cheshire events throughout the year. We offer a wide range of cultural, social and sporting activities. Something for everyone.
- An annual Pioneer Circle newsletter and impact video dedicated to the positive outcomes members have helped us achieve over the financial year.
- Opportunities to visit Leonard Cheshire services and programmes; watch our work in action by joining live online events; listen and chat to experts in the field and the people we support to learn more about your impact.
- Opportunities to feedback on your experience as a member.
- Dedicated access to a member of our Philanthropy Team.

As a small token of our thanks, every member will also receive an exclusive Leonard Cheshire Pioneer's pin badge.

We hope you will wear it with positivity, pride and pioneering spirit!

**“I chose to make a major gift to Leonard Cheshire and found it a very rewarding and enjoyable experience. It has given me great pleasure to see where and who my donation helped.”**

**Leonard Cheshire supporter**



Carol and Sarah on a fishing trip to Hunstrete Lakes



Timothy and his father Moses in Zambia

# JOIN OUR GLOBAL FAMILY

**Whether you decide to support our work in the UK or in rural and emerging economies across Asia and Africa, being a Leonard Cheshire Pioneer means you are part of a global community that is changing attitudes towards disability around the world.**

We aim to offer all our Leonard Cheshire Pioneers a membership service that reflects their interests and investment in our work.

## **Your commitment is precious.**

Each year, we ask members to indicate how much they intend to donate to Leonard Cheshire during the coming year. By committing to a certain amount, you will give us an idea of the resources we have available, and we can plan more efficiently initiatives that fulfil the mission of the Leonard Cheshire Pioneer Circle.

## **Regular donations**

By setting up a direct debit or standing order, you will help us to reduce the costs of managing your donations. It will also give us an idea of how much we can expect to receive and when. That way, we can more confidently plan longer term initiatives.

**If you decide to become a member, or have any questions about membership, we would love to hear from you.**

## **How to donate**

Visit our website to make a monthly or one-off donation online:  
**[www.leonardcheshire.org/pioneer-circle](http://www.leonardcheshire.org/pioneer-circle)**

## **And do let us know you have done so!**

Alternatively, please fill in and send us a gift form enclosed in this join pack using the SAE provided.

Remember, if you are a UK taxpayer, you can make your donation to Leonard Cheshire worth more by making a Gift Aid declaration.

# KEEPING IN TOUCH

If you choose to become a Leonard Cheshire Pioneer, we'd like to keep in touch to update you on the work of the Pioneer Circle, upcoming events, and other fundraising, volunteering and campaigning opportunities that might interest you as a member.

There are different communication channels we can use to do so. When you make your donation, you can let us know which ones you are happy for us to use.

## Contact details:

Leonard Cheshire Philanthropy Team

Email: [philanthropy@leonardcheshire.org](mailto:philanthropy@leonardcheshire.org)

Telephone: 020 3242 0200

## Privacy Policy

Everything we do and aim for is about supporting disabled people to live, learn and earn to their full potential.

At Leonard Cheshire we take your privacy very seriously. We promise to respect and keep safe any personal data you share with us, or that we receive from partner organisations.

You can read our policy notices on our website: [www.leonardcheshire.org/about-us/privacy-notice](http://www.leonardcheshire.org/about-us/privacy-notice)

# REFERENCES

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- vi. Access and Inclusion in 2018 - Consumers' experiences in communications markets. Ofcom, 2018

Disclaimer: Please note that where people are depicted without wearing masks or standard Personal Protection Equipment, these images were taken prior to March 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

Leonard Cheshire Disability is a registered charity no: 218186 (England & Wales) and no: SC005117 (Scotland), and a company limited by guarantee registered in England no: 552847. Registered office: 66 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL

**“Never doubt that a small group  
of thoughtful, committed  
citizens can change the world;  
indeed, it’s the only thing that  
ever has.”**

**Margaret Mead**

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