Dear Chief Executive,

The Accessible Britain Challenge

I am writing to invite your support and involvement in The Accessible Britain Challenge, which I will be launching on 4 September 2014.

As someone who values the work that you and your organisation undertake, I regard you as a key player in helping make the Challenge a success.

In July 2013 the Government published its disability strategy Fulfilling Potential – Making it Happen. An important part of the strategy focuses on communities being inclusive and accessible.

The Accessible Britain Challenge aims to motivate communities including local businesses, employers, service providers and community groups to do more to be inclusive and accessible by engaging and working with disabled people to remove barriers that get in the way of them being full and active participants in their community.

Inclusive and accessible communities

I see an inclusive and accessible community as one that:

- Includes disabled people equally
- recognises the positive contribution in terms of employment and vibrant local economies that 12.2 million disabled people across the UK could provide
- recognises physical, hidden and mental conditions
- encourages collaboration and co-production between disabled people and local organisations including local businesses, employers and service providers.

How can you get involved?

I hope that you and your organisation/group will engage and work in partnership with businesses, employers, service providers and community groups to design and deliver solutions to making your community more inclusive and accessible.

For example:

- Blackpool Transport has worked with disabled people and their organisations to develop a ‘Safe Journey Card’. The introduction of the card and training for drivers of buses and trams has improved the travel experience for disabled people and encouraged them to use public transport. Whilst for drivers a deeper understanding now enables them to provide a better service. This initiative demonstrates what can be achieved for little or no additional resource when partners work together
• Living Options Devon has worked in partnership with a range of organisations including Devon and Gloucestershire County Councils, the National Trust and Forestry Commission to develop a scheme (Countryside Mobility) to improve access to the countryside for disabled people.

The Challenge is also an opportunity to showcase and promote what your organisation has done/or is doing to make communities inclusive and accessible.

The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) is developing a resource pack that will bring together and share advice, products and materials, on initiatives and good practice. This resource pack will be published to coincide with the launch of the Challenge. I would welcome your involvement by sharing your own good practice or case studies in the pack. Please send details of these to the email address below by **26 August 2014** or shared as and when they are available.

**Recognising success**

I think it is important to publicly recognise those organisations in communities that are making a difference in the form of awards. We are still developing our arrangements for these which are likely to be under the broad categories of:

- Improved mobility
- Innovative use of buildings, places and spaces
- Safer neighbourhoods, and
- Inclusive social activities.

I will provide details of the awards and how nominations can be made in due course.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact Brian Keating at the Office for Disability Issues, using the following email address [fulfilling.potential@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fulfilling.potential@dwp.gsi.gov.uk).

I hope that by raising the profile of the positive contribution that disabled people make to communities we will all make a positive contribution to changing attitudes and behaviours towards disabled people.

I would welcome the participation and support of your organisation and networks in this Challenge so that our combined commitment can make a real difference to the lives of disabled people.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Mark Harper MP
Minister of State for Disabled People