**Leeds station lights up purple to celebrate disabled people worldwide**

Rays of purple light will beam from Leeds railway station’s Dark Arches on Thursday (3 December) as the rail industry joins the global #PurpleLightUp movement and celebrates the contribution of disabled people around the world.

As well as Leeds station, some of Britain’s other iconic stations, such as London Waterloo, London Liverpool Street, Bristol Temple Meads, King’s Cross and Manchester Piccadilly will be lit up in the internationally recognised colour for disability, to highlight the railways’ commitment to diversity and inclusion.

This year the Coronavirus pandemic has bought many new challenges to the rail industry and has impacted both staff and passengers. Mask wearing and social distancing have made travelling more challenging especially for passengers with non-visible disabilities.

Network Rail has introduced a range of measures to help everyone to travel safely and with confidence during the pandemic, including taking part in the sunflower lanyard scheme to help recognise those with a non-visible disability or those who are unable to wear a face covering. The organisation has also provided hand sanitiser in its stations, installed at various heights.

Nick Cooper, Station Manager for Network Rail at Leeds, said: “We’re really happy to be supporting this initiative and we continue to strive to create a railway which is suitable for everyone.

“We know that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought new challenges, and we’ve worked particularly hard over recent months to ensure that disabled passengers get a good service during this difficult time.”

Network Rail employs more than 800 disabled people and aims to have at least ten per cent of leadership positions filled by disabled people by 2024¹. To attract and retain more talented disabled people within the organisation, the company is working with Evenbreak, an award-winning social enterprise, run by and for disabled people. Network Rail has also been recognised as a finalist in the RIDI (Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative) awards 2020 for its autism recruitment programme.

To find out more, visit: networkrail.co.uk/purple

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

1. Network Rail is aware that 2.01 per cent of their staff self-report a disability, however, 55.86% have shared they don’t have a disability and 41.15% haven’t shared any data so there may be a higher percentage of disabled staff than those that self-report. Network Rail has challenged themselves to encourage 100 per cent of staff to feel comfortable sharing this data by 2024.