

Media Release: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

11 October 2018

## WheelPower's 'Feel Inspired Sports Camps' invite disabled participants across the country to break barriers to physical and mental health through sport

The national Charity for Wheelchair Sport, [WheelPower](http://www.wheelpower.org.uk), is delighted to announce that it is opening its' doors at Stoke Mandeville Stadium, (birthplace of the Paralympic Movement,) and at various venues across the country to wheelchair users and others with physical impairments looking to participate in sport and get active, as part of a nationwide campaign to break the barriers associated with the physical and mental health of disabled people and develop more cohesive communities.

The annual programme, funded by [The Arsenal Foundation](http://www.arsenal.com/foundation) (London locations), consists of a series of multi-activity sports camps aimed at getting disabled adults and children active and tackle the barriers to sport that many disabled people across the UK experience.

There are 13.9 million disabled people in the UK. Worryingly, 43% of the British public say they do not know anyone who is disabled and 67% of the nation feel uncomfortable about talking to disabled people (Source: Scope). On average, wheelchair users frequently feel excluded from taking part in sport and physical activity, with coaches often lacking in the training or equipment to make their sessions inclusive. As a result, wheelchair users often miss out on the physical and mental health benefits of being physically active.

The Feel Inspired (for young people) and Get Active (for adults) Sports Camps serve to dispel any difficulties or pre-conceptions that stand between disabled people and sport, and encourage new and existing WheelPower camp participants to continue to find a sport or activity they enjoy and take part in as part of an active life. The camps are split into three age group categories (5-11 year olds, 12-18 year olds and adults 18+), and take place across the country (in Buckinghamshire, London, and Norwich, to name a few) in October 2018 and November 2018, with sessions led by some of the country's experienced coaches in disability sport equipped to provide unique opportunities to try out new sports. Participants will benefit from making links to local disability sport clubs, and can try out the latest high-quality, specialist equipment. While the focus of Feel Inspired Sports Camps is on participation, a number of previous participants have gone on to compete at national and international level.

*Transforming lives through sport*

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Charity registration number: 265498 The British Wheelchair Sports Foundation Limited (WheelPower) registered office: as above Company registration number: 01059490

Last year WheelPower ran 8 camps across the UK with almost 287 British wheelchair users and disabled children and adults trying out a range of sports such as archery, tennis, fencing, table tennis, basketball, badminton, cue sports, golf and many more.

Martin McElhatton, CEO of WheelPower, comments, "Sport and Physical Activity can have an incredibly positive impact and transform the lives of disabled children and adults. WheelPower is aiming to help even more disabled people become active and enjoy the physical, mental and social benefits of taking part in sport. Through our Feel Inspired and Get Active Camps we will provide access to sport for many who haven't had the chance to try sport before."

Ollie Buncombe, Sports Development Officer at WheelPower says, "The Feel Inspired and Get Active sports camps are a fantastic way for children and adults of all ages and disabilities to engage in sport and physical activity. The camps give the opportunity to try new sports and activities to support community development, health and wellbeing and an active lifestyle. These camps also help to improve the social lives of participants through meeting other people from a similar background. The camps are however not just beneficial for the participants, they also give a platform to parents, guardians and other support staff including teachers and medical professionals to share stories and exchange tips and ideas to improve the care of participants at the games. Through increased provision of these camps and promotion to individuals these camps can change lives and have a real impact upon our society both locally and nationally".

For school-aged disabled children, either at SEN (Special Education Needs) or mainstream schools, the camps introduce them to other like-minded children outside what is often a small bubble, as well as broadening their horizons and a chance to make new friends. More mature participants can develop their independence and self-reliance in a supportive environment, which nurtures positive mental attitudes and aids in learning to cope with setbacks.

Rio Woolf, aged 10 years old, from Hertfordshire was born with a one-in-a-million bone deficiency called Tibial Aplasia. The condition meant that he was born with a missing ankle, knee joint, and shin bone (tibia). Surgeons carried out a through-knee amputation on Rio at just 14 months of age, and he was fitted with his first prosthetic limb at 17 months old to enable him to live the most mobile life possible. At the age of 4 years old he was lucky enough to be fitted with a running blade.

Talking about WheelPower's Feel Inspired Primary Sports Camps, Rio says: 'I enjoyed meeting other amputees and children with different disabilities there. I love playing all the disability sports - wheelchair basketball and zone hockey are my favourites. It keeps me fit and healthy and I meet new people, which is great!'

Rio continues: "I want to be an England amputee footballer and a Paralympic Sprinter at Paris 2024! WheelPower's primary sports camp provides so much opportunity, even if you're not aiming to compete and just want to come along to have a try, it's so much fun, just give it a go!".

The first event (Junior Sports Camp) kicks off at Stoke Mandeville Stadium on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and is set to have 63 participants attend, and counting.

**-ENDS-**

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, TO ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW, OR TO ATTEND THIS EVENT:

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Notes to the Editor:

Images of Rio Woolf, Age 10, Hertfordshire



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Feel Inspired Sports Camps Timetable of Events included below.

### **About WheelPower:**

WheelPower have been providing opportunities in sport for people with physical impairments for nearly 70 years.

Based in Stoke Mandeville, the home of the Paralympic movement, WheelPower is at the heart of wheelchair sport.

From first-timers to Paralympic medallists, WheelPower support and promote participation at all levels. We have seen how playing sport can enrich lives, offering tremendous physical and psychological benefits, whatever your age or ability.

Each year, WheelPower supports over 100,000 disabled people to participate in sport and activity across the country.

Join us in this mission as a participant, supporter or volunteer and together we can help transform lives through sport.

### **About the 'Pushing Forward' Strategy:**

Pushing Forward is WheelPower's Strategic Plan for the period between 2017 and 2021, in line with the Government Sport England Strategy ('Towards an Active Nation'). It aims to move the organisation forward, building on its heritage, traditions and people to provide opportunities which will enable more disabled people to lead healthy and active lives.

Pushing Forward will deliver our Mission to 'Transform Lives Through Sport' and is based on our core values as an open, inspiring, forward looking and innovative organisation.

Pushing Forward will:

- Increase participation in sport and physical activity
- Provide iconic and inclusive facilities at Stoke Mandeville Stadium
- Ensure WheelPower is a credible and robust organisation
- Inspire people through our work, our heritage and the power of the Paralympic Games

Pushing Forward will create opportunities to encourage inactive wheelchair users as well as those already taking part and is an exciting new chapter for WheelPower.

This year, the first instalment of camps run in October 2018 and November 2018. Please see below for the Feel Inspired Sports Camp timetable:

Feel Inspired Sports Camps 2018			
Date	Time	Camp	Venue
16 <sup>th</sup> October	09:30am – 15:00	Junior Sports Camp	Stoke Mandeville Stadium Guttmann Road Stoke Mandeville Buckinghamshire HP21 9PP United Kingdom
3 <sup>rd</sup> November	09:30am – 15:00	Get Active Camp (Adults)	Stoke Mandeville Stadium Guttmann Road Stoke Mandeville Buckinghamshire HP21 9PP United Kingdom
22 <sup>nd</sup> November	09:30am – 15:00	Primary Sports Camp (5-11 yrs)	Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre Leadmill Lane Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park London E20 3AD
23 <sup>rd</sup> November	09:30am – 15:00	Junior Sports Camp (12-18 years)	Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre Leadmill Lane Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park London E20 3AD

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