**STRICTLY UNDER EMBARGO: 19:30 Wednesday 16th October 2019**

**BBC Children in Need & The One Show’s Rickshaw Challenge returns for 2019***Team Rickshaw returns for the ninth year as they take on a challenging 400 mile route from Holyhead to London as they Pedal for Pudsey*

The Rickshaw Challenge has launched today (Wednesday 16th October 2019) with a new route, a new team, and a newly modified Rickshaw, as announced live during The One Show.

The annual challenge, which is now in its ninth year, will see a team of six young people and The One Show’s Matt Baker take on the eight-day challenge. It will begin on Friday 8th November in Holyhead and the team will travel across Wales for three days before crossing over into England in Oswestry, and then making their way down to the finish line at BBC Elstree Studios on Friday 15th November during the BBC Children in Need Appeal Show.

The team’s progress will be broadcast live on The One Show throughout the week, as Matt’s co-presenters back in the studio follow the team on their 400 mile journey. This year’s route will see the team tackle the highest village in the UK - Flash in the Peak District, and the steepest street in the world in Harlech, Wales.

Last year, a new custom rickshaw was built by a team of engineers at the McLaren Technology Centre to make the rickshaw accessible to a wider range of riders. An innovative seat-post system allowed team members with a range of mobilities to join the team. This year, McLaren has gone one step further and created an innovative solution that enables visually impaired and blind riders to take part in the challenge. A recumbent guide-trike, which fixes to the front of the Rickshaw allows steering and braking to be managed by a guide rider whilst a visually impaired rider pedals from the main driving seat of the Rickshaw.

The team taking on the challenge this year is made up of six young people:

**Adelle, 17 from Belfast.** In November 2017, Adelle’s best friend Victoria died from acute myeloid leukaemia. Several months after Victoria’s death, Adelle fell ill and doctors confirmed that she had the same cancer as her best friend. Adelle underwent chemotherapy which was initially successful. However her health deteriorated and at one point doctors even considered palliative care. Thankfully Adelle began to recover and in October 2018 was well enough for a bone marrow stem cell transplant. Throughout her diagnosis and treatment, Adelle has been supported by Cancer Fund Northern Ireland. The charity receives funding from BBC Children in Need to deliver residential sessions for young people who have been affected by cancer.

Adelle said: “Having cancer has taught me not to take life for granted and has really put things into perspective for me. I think being a part of Team Rickshaw will be a real challenge for me but I’m looking forward to getting on the road, sharing my story and helping to raise money for BBC Children in Need that will go on to make a difference to other young people’s lives.”

**Emma, 18, from Nottingham.** Shortly after Emma was born, doctors realised she had severe liver disease resulting in her undergoing two liver transplants. Sadly, her first, at the age of nine months was unsuccessful. However, she endured a second transplant aged three and a half. Due to Emma’s illness she spent a lot of time in hospital over the course of her childhood. As she grew up, Emma started swimming and in 2015 represented Team GB at the World Transplant Games, taking home several medals. However, in 2017, Emma had a seizure which left her unable to walk, see properly or concentrate for long periods. Emma’s sight gradually returned and a year later, following a long process of rehabilitation and physiotherapy, Emma was able to walk again. Children’s Liver Disease Foundation have provided Emma and her family with guidance and support throughout her life. The Foundation has received funding from BBC Children in Need since 2011.

Emma said: “I have always been quite sporty but after my seizure I had to work really hard to learn to walk again. Every day I’m getting stronger, but I know that being a part of Team Rickshaw will be a real challenge for me. I’m excited to head out on the road and hope that the public will cheer us on and help us raise money for BBC Children in Need.”

**Josh, 17, from Carnforth, Lancashire.** Josh is a young carer, and helps look after his younger brother Jacob, who is 15. Jacob has a condition called ADNP or Helsmoortel- Van Der Aa Syndrome. Jacob’s condition is rare and means that he has severe learning difficulties, global development delay and some physical problems. Jacob needs around the clock care which is provided by his parents - Darren and Lisa - and Josh. Caring for Jacob can be tough so away from this Josh finds solace in gardening, and following some volunteering at a local garden – Levens Hall Gardens - he has been taken on as an apprentice. Josh has been supported by Carer Support South Lakes which use a grant from BBC Children in Need to deliver a range of activities to give young carers like Josh, respite from their responsibilities and develop their skills and confidence.

Josh said: “The Rickshaw Challenge is a fantastic opportunity for me and I’m really looking forward to taking on the challenge and sharing my story. I can’t wait to be out on the road with the rest of the team and I hope that we see lots of support from the public along the way.”

**Kelsey, 17 from Watford.** Kelsey is blind and as a baby he was diagnosed with bilateral retinoblastoma in his left eye but unfortunately his eye couldn’t be saved. A few years later, at the age of five, Kelsey found out the cancer had returned in his right eye and despite doctors best efforts they were unable to save it, leaving Kelsey blind. For the last six years he’s been playing goalball, after being inspired by the Paralympic Games in 2012. Goalball UK is funded by BBC Children in Need to deliver goalball activities and competitive opportunities for blind and partially sighted young people to help build confidence and increase independence. Kelsey also has a Guide Dog called Lacey who has enabled Kelsey to live a much more independent life.

Kelsey said: “I’m determined to prove that being blind should never be a barrier and I’m really looking forward to being part of Team Rickshaw. I hope that the public get behind us, come out to support us on the road, and donate to BBC Children in Need.”

**Thomas, 17 from Swindon.** Thomas has cerebral palsy, autism and ADHD. Throughout his life bullying has been a persistent issue. Thomas was slow to develop as a toddler and over the years has needed operations and regular physio. Thomas has always been a keen sportsman and playing sport has provided him with an escape from the difficulties in his life. Thomas has been supported by Cerebral Palsy Sport which receives funding from BBC Children in Need to give young people with cerebral palsy the chance to access training and regular sporting events. Through his involvement with the charity he has competed in the CISPRA Games and won silver medals in 100m and 200m running. Thomas says being involved with the organisation has been life changing.

Thomas said: “I hope that I can inspire other young people who have been through a similar experience to me and show them that you can achieve whatever you set your mind to. I’m excited to be a part of Team Rickshaw 2019 and am looking forward to seeing people out on the road cheering us on!”

**Uche, 20 from London**. Uche had always been popular growing up; he enjoyed school and was good at sport. However, in February 2017 Uche’s life changed dramatically. When Uche discovered his bike had been stolen, he was stabbed when attempting to find it. The knife went through his upper arm and an artery. He was rushed to hospital and following surgery his condition stabilised. Uche spent a month in hospital and although the physical scars of the attack began to heal, Uche still struggled to come to terms with what had happened. Recovery was tough for Uche but it was during this time that he started attending XLP, a local youth project that is funded by BBC Children in Need. Uche was mentored by XLP which has helped him to focus on his future, and with their support he’s secured an apprenticeship in Engineering.

Uche said: “Following the stabbing I found things quite difficult but with the help of XLP I have been able to focus on my future and make the best of my situation. I’m really looking forward to being a part of Team Rickshaw and hope that the people of the UK will get behind us and help us to raise money for BBC Children in Need.”

Matt Baker, Presenter of The One Show who will be joining the team on the road, said of the challenge: “I can’t believe that in just a few weeks’ time we’ll be heading back on the road again for the ninth year of the Rickshaw Challenge!

 “We have a truly inspirational team joining us on the road, and we’re looking forward to seeing all those friendly faces who will be cheering us on from the roadside, as we battle the elements and complete the 400 mile journey from Wales to Elstree.”

Since 2011, The One Show’s Rickshaw Challenge has raised over £25 million for BBC Children in Need, with donations going on to make a difference to the lives of children and young people across the UK who need it most.

In an exciting first for the fundraising challenge, The Hunter Foundation (THF) has pledged to give 40p for every £1 donated by the general public to the Rickshaw Challenge\*, helping to make the public’s generous donations go even further in making a difference to young lives.

Speaking of the pledge, Sir Tom Hunter said: “Every year I watch the Rickshaw Challenge and I can’t help but be inspired by the wonderful young people on the road and all of the support that I see from people across the UK getting together to fundraise and donate to BBC Children in Need. This year I’m looking forward to watching the whole nation get behind the team again and help us to raise even more money for such a worthy cause.

“At The Hunter Foundation we aim to maximise the impact that our money has on children and young people across the UK who are facing disadvantage, and working with BBC Children in Need enables us to do this. That’s why this year for every £1 donated to the Rickshaw Challenge we will donate 40p and make your donation go even further.”

The One Show viewers will be able to follow Team Rickshaw’s progress on the show each day, but the full route – including a real-time update of the rickshaw’s progress – is also available at bbc.co.uk/Pudsey.

**~ENDS~**

For more information please contact: sarah.johnson04@bbc.co.uk

**Notes to Editors:**

Photos can be found here: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fdlr27lm3pn4h8s/AABA1SzyrHulnUAFRSdiF31Ua?dl=0>

**Route Summary:**Day 1 (Friday 8th November): Holyhead to Portmeirion
Day 2 (Saturday 9th November): Portmeirion to Machynlleth
Day 3 (Sunday 10th November): Machynlleth to Oswestry
Day 4 (Monday 11th November): Oswestry to Crewe
Day 5 (Tuesday 12th November): Crewe to Matlock Bath
Day 6 (Wednesday 13th November): Matlock Bath to Melton Mowbray
Day 7 (Thursday 14th November): Melton Mowbray to Bedford
Day 8 (Friday 15th November): Bedford to Elstree

**About BBC Children in Need:**

BBC Children in Need’s vision is that every child in the UK has a safe, happy and secure childhood and the chance to reach their potential. The charity will realise this vision by supporting, promoting and publicising work that addresses the challenges that children and young people face and work that builds their skills and resilience.

BBC Children in Need is currently supporting over 3,000 local charities and projects in communities across the UK that are helping children and young people facing a range of disadvantages such as living in poverty, being disabled or ill, or experiencing distress, neglect or trauma.

Further information on BBC Children in Need can be found at bbc.co.uk/pudsey

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**About The Hunter Foundation’s pledge:**

\*Thanks to Sir Tom Hunter and The Hunter Foundation, this year donations to the Rickshaw Challenge will receive an additional 40% boost to a maximum value of £3million.