Over 200 local school children to benefit from launch of new initiative to improve physical and mental wellbeing through grassroots sport

SportInspired, London, 14th December: Today sees the launch of ‘Active Communities, Brighter Future’, an initiative by the national charity SportInspired and local business Takeda UK.

The programme aims to increase the physical activity levels and improve the mental wellbeing of over 200 children living in Slough, Maidenhead and South Bucks. Takeda UK and SportInspired will work in partnership to bring together sports clubs and schools across the regions to build a lasting impact for school children through grassroots sports.

Active Communities, Brighter Future will teach 8 and 9-year olds how to achieve better physical and mental wellbeing through being active, learning new skills, giving back, connecting to others and being mindful. It will provide children with the opportunity to try out new sports including basketball, fencing, taekwondo, handball and yoga, and to choose one of these to participate in on a weekly basis at newly created after-school clubs.

Seven schools across Slough, South Bucks and Maidenhead will take part in the initiative which will be delivered across three phases to the end of the 2018 academic year.

The first phase lasting until January will be ‘Team Spirit’ sessions where children will be taught the ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’ – an evidence based approach to improving health and wellbeing by introducing five simple activities into daily life. The children will also be taught about healthy eating, reinforcing the benefits of ‘Five a Day’ – the government’s healthy eating campaign - and building on the launch of the Childhood Obesity Strategy last year.

Phase two will be a day-long ‘Festival of Wellbeing’ at Magnet Leisure Centre, Maidenhead on 25th January where the 200+ children involved will get to participate in a full-day of activity, trying out sports that may not usually be open to them.

Following the Festival, the children will decide which sport they would like to keep practising and each of the participating schools will offer this as an after-school club for the rest of the school year. This will be the third phase of the programme aiming to develop positive, habit-forming sustainable change, taking place between January and the end of the 2018 school year.

SportInspired has had success right across the country implementing similar programmes with over 90% of children participating reporting improved confidence, while 20% start attending sports clubs having not done so before. Commenting, Richard Raynes, CEO of SportInspired, said:

“We are delighted to be working with Takeda to help inspire local children to find a sport that they enjoy, and to provide the opportunity for them to continue playing. Across the UK, nearly a third of children are obese or overweight’. In Buckinghamshire, almost 27% of children aged 10-11 are overweight or obese and in Slough, that figure rises to 38%ii,iii. By increasing the level of sport among young people, we hope to transform the local community by improving mental wellbeing, addressing obesity and preventing chronic illness in the future.”

Takeda staff volunteers will join SportInspired in delivering the Festival of Wellbeing event in January and supporting the after-school sports clubs during the third phase of the programme. Remarking on his team’s participation, Adam Zaeske, Managing Director of Takeda UK and Ireland said:
“As a pharmaceutical company, our aim is to provide better health and a brighter future for our patients, employees, and our local community. Takeda and SportInspired share the same vision of a healthier and more active society, and I am proud of the enthusiasm my colleagues have shown for this programme. We look forward to working in partnership with our community to achieve lasting impact for school children. We’d like to thank the local schools and sports clubs for their participation and SportInspired for their inspiring work, not only in our neighbourhood but for people across the country.

In addition to supporting the 8 and 9-year-olds, SportInspired and Takeda will deliver ‘Young Leader’ training sessions to 35 young people aged between 13 and 14. Following the ‘Journey to Employment (JET)’ framework, these aim to develop employability skills including communications, leadership, and teamwork. The students will be given the opportunity to test out their new skills by supporting in the delivery of the Active Communities, Brighter Future initiative.

An invitation to attend ‘Team Spirit’ sessions and the Festival of Wellbeing will be extended to local dignitaries and local print and broadcast journalists. To register your interest to attend one or both events, please see notes below.

-Ends-

Notes to the editor:

To attend a Team Spirit session and/or the Festival of Wellbeing or for more information, please contact:

Jennifer Wilson
Takeda Communications Consultant
jeniwilson8@yahoo.co.uk / 07539359676

Trupti Reddy
Senior Impact Manager
Trupti.reddy@sportinspired.org / 07816973515

About the SportInspired/Takeda Active Communities, Brighter Future initiative
There will be over 200 primary school children and 35 secondary school children involved.

Primary schools
• Ryvers Primary School: 90 children
• Littledown Primary School: 30 children
• Our Lady of Peace Catholic Primary School: 60 children
• Penn Wood Primary School: 30 children

Secondary schools (Young Leaders)
• Cox Green School: 25 children
• Langley Academy: 5 children
• The Beaconsfield School: 5 children

About SportInspired
SportInspired is an award-winning national charity which uses the power of sports to help deprived young people achieve their full potential by leading healthier, happier lives. They believe that mental wellbeing is the key underpinning factor for a person to lead a fulfilling, healthy, and successful life; that a person’s sense of self-worth is what makes the difference between surviving and thriving.

SportInspired’s approach is to put young people at the centre of whole-community programmes that help to change and reinforce positive behaviours – both for them and everyone involved in the
programme. Their programmes are a platform for social change delivered by connecting and leveraging assets within the community – business CSR resources and volunteers, primary and secondary schools, sports clubs, councils, housing associations, local media and key community influencers.

To date, SportInspired has delivered over 300 programmes in 31 communities across the UK and Ireland involving 60,000 primary school pupils, 5,000 young leaders and 15,000 business volunteers. They have worked in partnership with over 30 corporate partners in the past 9 years, including the likes of UBS, Deloitte, and Sky.

Following previous programmes, over 90% of children involved report improved communications skills, teamwork and leadership skills, and confidence, while 20% start attending sports clubs having not done so before.

**About Takeda UK**

Takeda UK Ltd., located in High Wycombe, is the UK marketing and sales organisation of Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited, Osaka, Japan. Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited is a global, research and development-driven pharmaceutical company committed to bringing better health and a brighter future to patients by translating science into life-changing medicines. Takeda focuses its R&D efforts on oncology, gastroenterology and central nervous system therapeutic areas plus vaccines. Takeda conducts R&D both internally and with partners to stay at the leading edge of innovation. New innovative products, especially in oncology and gastroenterology, as well as our presence in Emerging Markets, fuel the growth of Takeda. More than 30,000 Takeda employees are committed to improving quality of life for patients, working with our partners in health care in more than 70 countries. For more information, visit [http://www.takeda.com/news](http://www.takeda.com/news)

Additional information about Takeda UK Ltd. is available through its corporate website, [www.takeda.co.uk](http://www.takeda.co.uk).

---