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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **THOUSANDS COUNTING DOWN TO BIRMINGHAM'S BIGGEST-EVER WEEKEND OF RUNNING**

Thousands of participants of all ages and abilities are preparing to visit Birmingham for the city's biggest ever weekend of running.

Now just days away, the Simplyhealth Great Birmingham Run takes place on Sunday, October 15.

The city's annual 13.1-mile event will be held on the same day as the inaugural Birmingham International Marathon, which reached capacity months ago.

From toddlers and teens to the fastest club runners, there are events catering for families with the Simplyhealth Junior and Mini Great Birmingham Runs taking place on Saturday, October 14.

More than 500 children will be heading to the iconic Alexander Stadium on Saturday for the 1.5K Mini Run and 2.5K Junior Run.

All finishers receive a goody bag and medal as soon as they cross the finish line.

And then on Sunday, Birmingham will enjoy an unprecedented day of activity after a combined 22,000 people signed up to take part in the marathon or half marathon.

Simplyhealth's #millionsmoving campaign has a goal to improve everyday health by encouraging people of all ages to run, jog, walk, or simply move together.

James Glover, Simplyhealth's Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, said: "Our own independent research through YouGov shows that people state 'being unfit' as the primary reason for feeling unhealthy. Our ambition is to help people make the most of life by supporting their everyday health, and we strongly believe that movement and activity is the cornerstone to better health. [www.millionsmoving.co.uk](http://www.millionsmoving.co.uk) is a great resource for those who are looking for inspiration."

The Simplyhealth Great Birmingham Run half marathon starts on Jennens Road in the city centre, alongside the recently-opened Royal Birmingham Conservatoire building. The marathon starts earlier in the day at the Alexander Stadium, with both events finishing at Aston University.

The Simplyhealth Great Birmingham Run course takes in landmarks such as the iconic Selfridges store – one of the UK's most photographed buildings – Edgbaston Stadium, Cannon Hill Park and picturesque Bournville, home of Cadbury chocolate.

Hosting the Simplyhealth Great Birmingham Run and Birmingham International Marathon helped boost Birmingham's bid to host the Commonwealth Games in 2022 as the city waits to find out from the Games Federation if it has been selected to host the sports spectacular.

The Simplyhealth Great Birmingham Run features the Arcadis Business Challenge, which invites companies of all sizes to compete for fastest-time trophies and all-important bragging rights in the corporate community. Some 250 participants will be representing their companies at this year's Challenge with title partner Arcadis putting forward 80 runners.

Among those taking part on Sunday is the remarkable 'Blind Dave' Heeley, who won't be running one long distance event – but two.

The Black Country running legend will be attempting to complete both the Birmingham International Marathon AND Simplyhealth Great Birmingham Run in one day – a total of 39.3 miles.

It's all part of lifelong West Brom fan Dave's efforts to conquer the Great Run Company's entire, 25-strong events calendar in 2017 – understood to be a world first for a blind pairing – in aid of the Albion Foundation.

And a Birmingham teacher who has shed over six stone is preparing for his biggest challenge yet.

Stuart Warner, who teaches English at Longbridge's Colmers Secondary School, wouldn't have even dreamt of entering the Simplyhealth Great Birmingham Run when he tipped the scales at 25st 5lbs 21 months ago.

But the 33-year-old, who says running has been central to his incredible weight loss journey, has committed to taking on the annual 13.1-mile challenge around the city's streets on Sunday.

Stuart amazed himself by completing his first-ever running event, the Simplyhealth Great Birmingham 10k in April, and now weighs 19st 3lbs, having shed ten inches from his waist.

David Hart, Communications Director for the Great Run Company, said: "If there's one thing we've learned this year it's that Birmingham loves to run!

"We're always delighted at how many people take part in our events and this year will be extra special as we welcome the first ever Birmingham International Marathon, which has attracted phenomenal interest runners from across the UK and beyond.

"We hope thousands of people will line the streets to cheer on our runners of all abilities, many of whom will be raising thousands of pounds for good causes or celebrating milestones in lifestyle goals."

For information regarding road closures on Sunday, October 15, visit

<http://www.greatrun.org/great-birmingham-run>

To sign up for the Simplyhealth Great Birmingham 10K on Sunday May 6, 2018, visit

<http://www.greatrun.org/great-birmingham-10k>

The reminder service for the 2018 Simplyhealth Great Birmingham Run, Junior and Mini Runs and the Birmingham International Marathon will open on Sunday 15 October. Sign up at [www.greatrun.org/reminder](http://www.greatrun.org/reminder) to receive an email when entries are open.

**Ends**

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **The Great Run Company**

The Great Run Series is the world's favourite run with over 230,000 participants a year taking part. The events programme stretches across the UK from Aberdeen to Portsmouth offering a full range of distances from 5k through to the half marathon. A full range of online training services are available from Great Run Training. Great Run Local is a series of weekly events staged in our key cities. All designed to provide the support and advice for participants of all abilities to achieve their personal goal.

To find out more about the events and services provided by Great Run and its partners visit [www.greatrun.org](http://www.greatrun.org)

Great Run, the world's favourite run.

#### **Simplyhealth**

Simplyhealth is the UK's leading provider of everyday health cash plans, dental payment and pet health plans. Since 1872 – long before the existence of the NHS – Simplyhealth has been helping people to make the most of life, by managing their everyday health needs. Today we ensure over three million people in the UK have access to the health products, services and support they need, when they need them and at a price they can afford.

Helping people make the most of life is our sole purpose and giving back is a huge part of that. As a result of our success, in 2015 we were able to donate £1.6m to our charitable causes, supporting 25 different charities including Revitalise (this year's Great Run Series nominated charity), Music in Hospitals, Brainwave Centre, British Lung Foundation and Rainbow Trust. Our future success and performance will enable us to deliver our ongoing pledge to donate 10% of our profits to charity every year, supporting health-related causes that help people with everyday health conditions to make the most of life.

Simplyhealth is a trading name of Simplyhealth Access, which is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

For further information on Simplyhealth please visit [www.simplyhealth.co.uk](http://www.simplyhealth.co.uk)

#### **Revitalise**

Revitalise is the Great Run Series' nominated charity for 2017, and provides holiday-style breaks with care for disabled people and their carers. More details available from [www.revitalise.org.uk](http://www.revitalise.org.uk)