

WESLEYAN FOUNDATION SUPPORTS 15 DENTISTRY STUDENTS WITH £65,000 SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING

Birmingham-based specialist financial services mutual, Wesleyan, has announced it will be supporting 15 dental students from disadvantaged communities with scholarship funding worth over £65,000. Each student will receive scholarship fees of £1,500 per year for the first three years, as well as regular mentoring and practical support both before and at the University of Birmingham.

The scholarships form part of the University of Birmingham's Pathways to Birmingham (P2B) programme, which has helped over 5,500 young people from underrepresented backgrounds study at the University over the last 20 years. The P2B programmes are targeted at young people who are the first in their family to go to university, are from low-income households, live in a postcode where few people go to university, have a disability, have been in care and/or are estranged from both parents or guardians.

The need for skilled dentists is more urgent than ever due to the pandemic. Dental surgeries were closed for months in lockdowns and many people are still avoiding routine check-ups for fear of COVID-19. This means people often need more complex treatments for advanced tooth decay and gum disease when they do see a dentist.

Nathan Wallis, Chief of Staff at Wesleyan said: 'We've always been committed to supporting dentists through every step of



their careers, from their first appointment right through to retirement, and we are proud to support 15 students, at the start of their professions. Not only do we care about our communities and the challenges of social mobility, but we also understand that access to funding is critical to getting started at university.'

Professor David Adams, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College of Medical and Dental Sciences, from University of

Birmingham said: 'Undergraduate dentistry students study for five years, instead of the usual three for many other subjects; by choosing to go into a field where they can help others, they are making a huge financial commitment. The scholarships from the Wesleyan Foundation will help to ease the pressure on students who would have otherwise struggled to get started at university.'

FREE FLU JABS FOR DENTISTS AXED BY NHS ENGLAND

The British Dental Association has slammed moves by NHS England not to keep dentists and their teams within the NHS flu vaccine programme this year.

Officials have now confirmed the complimentary offer of flu vaccinations for primary care staff will not be extended for 2022/23.

In September 2021 Chief Dental Officer, Sara Hurley, encouraged all dentists to take up the new offer for their own safety and their patients, many of whom are clinically vulnerable. In the previous year, dentists had been invited – in error – to sign up for the programme.

The BDA has consistently pressed for this to be made a permanent arrangement, especially now COVID-19 and flu will be circulating together.

British Dental Association Chair Eddie Crouch said: 'For a fleeting moment it seemed like dentists were finally being treated as part of the NHS family. Sadly the plan to 'Live with COVID' amounts to withdrawing needed protection for our teams and our patients in the years ahead.

'We were told inclusion in this programme was important for both individual and public health. Absolutely nothing has changed in that regard.

'In a bid to save pennies officials are sending a dreadful message to tens of thousands of frontline healthcare workers, and the millions of patients they treat.'

