

Attractive new offer for dental trainees set to improve dental care in rural Wales

A new recruitment initiative aimed at encouraging future dental trainees to take up opportunities across rural Wales has been launched by Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW).

Most new dental graduates choose to complete their Dental Foundation Training (DFT) year in a general dental practice. However, many dental graduates prefer to complete their DFT year in more urban areas, leaving some practices in rural parts of Wales under-resourced with empty training positions.

In 2021/22, 6% of vacancies were left unfilled. This meant that support packages had to be rapidly put in place for these practices, and unfortunately access to NHS care for the local population in that area reduced.

As a solution, HEIW has launched DFT WERO (Welsh Enhanced Recruitment Offer), a new initiative to encourage trainees to complete their training in a rural practice and increase dental services for people in the area. The initiative offers an enhanced support package for trainees who carry out their DFT year in specific rural dental practices in West, North and Central Wales.

This new package includes benefits such as:

- £5,000+ rural living grant
- Weekly study day programme
- Royal college membership exam fees covered by HEIW
- £600 study budget towards exam preparation
- Access to free online learning resources
- Wellbeing support.

Kirstie Moons, HEIW's Dental Postgraduate Dean said: 'I am delighted that HEIW can offer local incentives to grow and retain our dentist workforce in traditionally hard to recruit areas in Wales.'



This initiative is approved by Welsh Government and will help ensure continued NHS dental care to people in rural areas. It will also safeguard Dental Foundation Training places in these dental practices for newly qualified dentists to apply to in future years'.

William Howell, practice owner at Cardigan Dental Practice which offers a dental training place, said: 'Cardigan offers so much from a thriving town centre to its beautiful beaches and countryside. Our new dental practice has state-of-the-art facilities, experienced staff who are passionate about teaching and potential employment opportunities once the training has been completed. We will do everything to make trainees feel welcome and I'm sure they'll end up falling in love with the area just like we have.'

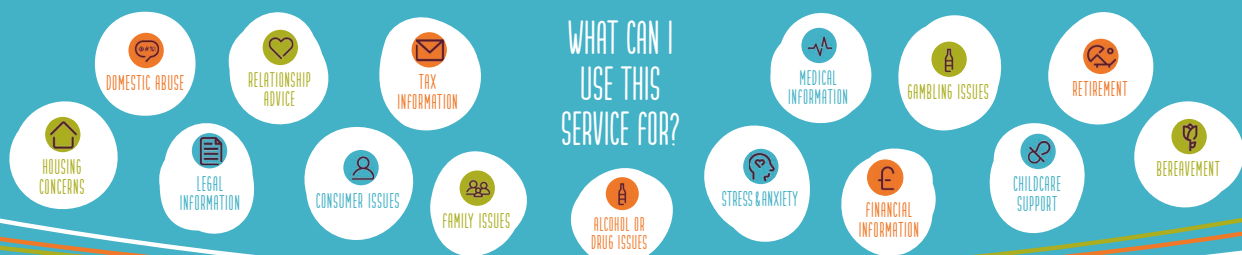
The initiative will open to new and upcoming graduates from Cardiff University Dental School, and graduates of other schools who have an existing link to Wales in February 2023.

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