

## Can you help colleagues in financial crisis this festive season?

This autumn, the BDA Benevolent Fund has announced an increase in applications for assistance and is reaching out to dental professionals for help.

As of September 2016, the Fund has received almost double the number of applications for assistance than in the same period in 2015, and is asking for help to continue to deliver the high standard of support that the beneficiaries deserve over the festive period.

Christmas is the most worrying period for the charity's beneficiaries, when keeping warm becomes a priority and, all too often, hitting financial hardship means that heating bills cannot be met. This is a small part of the support that the BDA Benevolent Fund provides over the winter months, alongside providing grants to help with food and warm clothes as well as a friendly voice when things feel overwhelming. However, with such a large increase in applications this year, the charity is keen to ensure that the level of care and service they provide the beneficiaries is not compromised and therefore asks the profession for its support.

The difference the donations at Christmas make cannot be underestimated. One beneficiary wrote to thank the charity for their support last year: 'Many, many thanks for the wonderful and generous grant towards my heating bills this winter. Heat is important to me as, like so many old people, I have osteoarthritis in my back, knees and shoulder so warmth brings comfort. Again, I thank you all for this most generous gift.'

As the charity's friend and past patron, Professor Nairn Wilson said: 'If we in dentistry don't give, who is going to? I think it reflects well on our professional status and us as individuals if we can provide much-needed help for those who are suffering beyond hardship and have fallen into an untenable lifestyle, for the most part through no



fault of their own. I personally believe that we're in a profession that helps and supports one another and giving to the Benevolent Fund is a way to fulfil that duty of care.'

While each applicant is carefully assessed to ensure the donation meets their individual needs, last year saw just £75 provide a school uniform for a child over 11 years, £210 support a family over the Christmas period and £340 keep an elderly couple warm. If you would like to make a donation, visit <https://www.justgiving.com/bdabenevolentfund>, text DENT15 followed by the amount in £'s to 70070 or send cheques payable to 'BDA Benevolent Fund' to: BDA Benevolent Fund, 64 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8YS.

[www.bdabenevolentfund.org.uk](http://www.bdabenevolentfund.org.uk)

## Dental volunteers needed for the homeless this Christmas



National homelessness charity Crisis is calling on dentists, dental nurses and dental hygienists to provide treatment for homeless people at its temporary centres in London this Christmas.

Crisis at Christmas 2016 runs from 23–30 December, with centres set to open across London, Birmingham, Newcastle, Coventry and Edinburgh. As well as warmth, companionship and hot meals, guests will receive healthcare and specialist advice on housing, work and benefits.

The dental service relies on qualified volunteers to provide a range of routine dental treatments including check-ups, scaling, polishing and fillings. Last year, 377 dental consultations took place with 432 guests receiving a treatment across all centres.

Oonagh McCloskey, who has been a dental volunteer for six years, said: 'I first got involved with Crisis when I decided that I wanted to use my skills as a dentist to provide a service to those less fortunate than myself. A great combination makes the dental team an annual success: we have the diversity of the volunteers with an array of different skill sets, which enables us to provide all sorts of dental care. It is a great feeling to be able to provide a guest with the service and seeing them smiling proudly afterwards.'

Crisis at Christmas centres are run by thousands of volunteers from all walks of life with registration now open at [www.crisis.org.uk](http://www.crisis.org.uk)/volunteer.