



Commonwealth Dental Association

Working for Oral Health in the Commonwealth

The Manchester Declaration

May 2015

Following on from the successful conferences in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Colombo and Accra, the latter producing the Accra Declaration, the Commonwealth Dental Association (CDA) continued to consider issues relating to oral care for vulnerable people and support for those who care for them.

At a workshop during its Biennial General Meeting in Manchester in May 2015, the CDA confirmed an absolute requirement to ensure equality of access to oral healthcare, coupled with a need to understand the importance of values, culture, beliefs and ethnicity on the delivery of oral healthcare. Vulnerable people have the same rights to the same access, the same high-quality services as all other people, and the right to self-determination and freedom from discrimination.

The Conference heard a series of presentations from eminent speakers, including those related to the different CDA regions, and then held a workshop covering the following three areas relating to the Conference title of 'Support for Vulnerable¹ Patients and their Carers²'.

1. The concept of vulnerability;
2. Support for those with learning disabilities and their carers;
3. Strategies for the oral healthcare of those in residential accommodation and their carers.

The Conference then called on policy makers, healthcare professionals and all those involved in caring for vulnerable people to:

- “1. Promote the need for better access to oral healthcare services for all vulnerable people, ensuring that those responsible understand the links between poor oral health and general health.
2. Understand the effects of an increasing older population, with a consequently increasing percentage of those becoming vulnerable over time.

¹ A Vulnerable Person is someone who, at that point in time, is not able to look after themselves without assistance, for whatever reason.

² A Carer is any person who spends time helping an individual with their basic care

3. Understand and work towards mitigating the risk factors of those with learning disabilities and learning difficulties.
4. Understand and publicise the professional duty of care and the need to be aware of, prevent and report abuse.
5. Support individuals who are vulnerable for whatever reason.
6. Promote the concept of a health passport³ for vulnerable people.
7. Promote the need for a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach, to address the complex health needs of vulnerable people.
8. Work to remove or minimise the barriers to providing oral care for vulnerable people, including ensuring that the cultural and local leaders and elders are mobilised, and family traditions are adhered to, where possible.
9. Promote the documenting of the best interests process for those with limited capacity, and the use of oral health assessment forms⁴ and daily oral care plans.
10. Provide, promote and utilise education and training materials and opportunities, to help Commonwealth nations improve the oral healthcare of their vulnerable people.
11. Promote the concept of health professionals learning and working together, for the benefit of carers and vulnerable people, noting that carers can be the key people in this process.
12. Acknowledge that the differences between people are valuable and enriching, and promote the need for high quality culturally responsive care for vulnerable people.”

Manchester, May 6th 2015

³ A Health Passport is a core record of how an individual’s health is evolving, together with key information required to support the individual’s health and wellbeing, and may include instructions for future care, in the event of incapacity.

⁴ An oral health assessment is the documenting of an individual’s oral health including information about dentures, if they wear them.