Guidance for referring dentists regarding Level 1 Adult Special Care that should normally by treated in a general dental practice

Level 1

Level 1 care refers to procedures and/or conditions to be performed or managed by a dentist commensurate with level of competence as defined by the Curriculum for Dental Foundation Training or its equivalent. The emphasis should be on thorough assessment, effective on-going surveillance, robust preventive care and delivery of relatively straight-forward treatments. Components of level 1 complexity are often provided by other members of the dental team such as dental nurses with extended duties, dental hygienists or therapists.

Providers of Level 1 care should make reasonable adjustments to facilitate access for Special Care Dentistry patients in terms of time, equipment and facilities. In this way all patients can be treated with equality, respect and dignity close to their home. Dentists need to be conversant with current guidance relevant to Special Care Dentistry patients, for example safeguarding training, obtaining consent and the management of patients taking certain medications. Level 1 care includes the following:

- oral health assessment of need and circumstances, oral health review, risk
- evidence-based preventive intervention to enable high quality and effective oral hygiene and diet advice, fluoride therapy; where appropriate, liaison with carers may be required to facilitate this
- provision of basic primary dental care
- emergency treatment and management of pain, infection and dento-alveolar trauma
- delivery of treatment following the provision of a treatment plan from a Special Care Dentistry specialist provider
- continuing care: the diverse needs and complexities of this patient group (regarding access, communication, cooperation and medical issues) might necessitate shared care for a short period of time or a specific treatment episode. In these cases appropriate referrals should be made to Special Care Dentistry services in a timely fashion and in accordance with local protocols *

* Please note that that there are many people with a wide variety of medical conditions, often taking extensive medication, that in themselves do not preclude those people being treated routinely in a general dental practice. Please consider carefully your reasons for making a referral.