

The changes are designed to assist dental professionals in understanding various roles within the dental team. This is vital when incorporating skill mix which has been demonstrated to be beneficial for individual clinicians, dental teams and patients. This will in turn promote the development of a diverse and skilled workforce, ultimately enhancing the delivery of optimal patient care.

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<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-024-6767-3>

DIY dentistry

Desperate times call for desperate dentistry

Sir, a 43-year-old man was referred to the University Dental Hospital of Manchester for management of missing 11 and 21 which were lost following trauma. The patient had struggled to find a general dentist and so took it upon himself to procure the requisite components and build his own denture (Fig. 1).

Fear not Finlay Sutton your job is safe. While commendable for its innovation, the homemade partial acrylic denture revealed some failings in support, stability, and retention (Fig. 2) and its design was inherently unhygienic, contributing to inflammation of the soft tissues surrounding the denture-bearing area. Further clinical examination revealed inflamed gingivae and the presence of multiple carious lesions, underscoring the patient’s unmet primary dental care needs.

This case exemplifies the importance of access to dental services for basic but essential needs to be met. Many patients are, however, unable to access NHS service or afford private care.^{1,2} Furthermore, the COVID pandemic and lockdown created a multitude of additional challenges for dental practices across England and the repercussions for access to NHS dentistry have been highlighted in a comprehensive survey conducted by the BBC, supported by the British Dental Association (BDA).

The survey outcomes were unequivocally concerning, revealing that 90% of the NHS dental practices included in the study (6,193 out of 6,880) were not able to accommodate new adult patients.¹ Of these practices, 25% maintained an open waiting list, and a notable 17% exhibited a waiting period of

one year or longer or were unable to provide accurate information on waiting list times.¹

This is just one human story of desperation to seek dental help in the current climate. It does, however, reveal the ingenuity humans are capable of. If only some of this could be channelled into solving the problems of access to dental health care.

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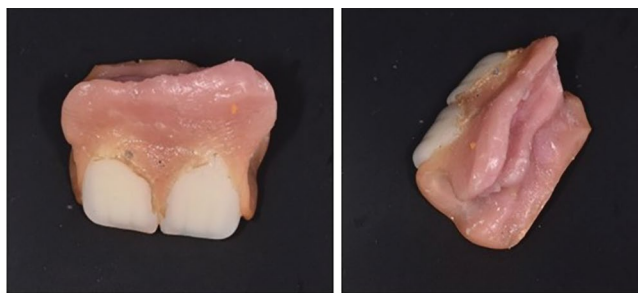




Fig. 1 A homemade denture made by the patient after a trauma and loss of their upper central incisors



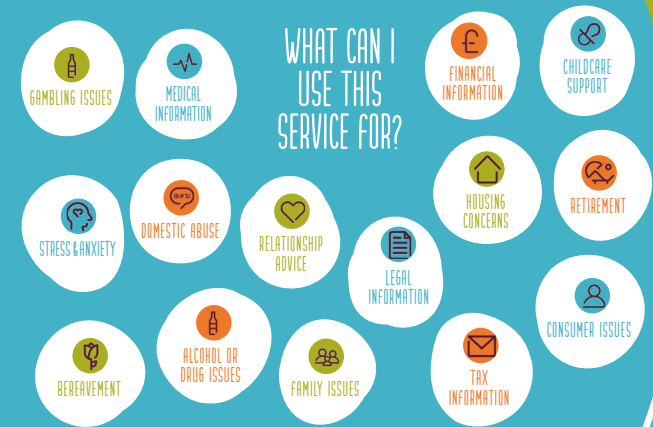
Fig. 2 The homemade denture made *in situ* intra-orally





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