INTRODUCTION

1.1 The oral motor device, also known as chewy tube, chewy stix, chewys, are FDA approved (Food and Drug Administration), rubber devices designed for the reasons listed in 1.2 below. Originally designed to be used with the Jaw Rehabilitation Program they offer a safe, non-toxic surface and are latex and lead free.

1.2 Oral motor devices / chewy tubes can be used for three clinical reasons:

- To provide resilient, non-food chewable surface for practicing biting and chewing skills
- As an alternative to inappropriate biting, chewing of non-foods and persons
- As oral tactile stimulation and proprioceptive input

1.3 This practice guidance note (PGN) refers to the use of Oral motor device / Chewy Tubes for the purpose of all of the above.
2. **AIM**

2.1 This protocol is set out to guide Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust/NTW) staff in the safe and therapeutic use of the oral motor device/chewy tube throughout the Trust. It must be used in accordance with manufactures guidelines and practice guidelines detailed in this document.

3. **OBJECTIVES**

3.1 Guidance and recording for the use of the oral motor device/chewy tube should always be followed, as such:

- Oral motor devices / chewy tubes should always be used with staff supervision
- Twice daily observation and recording of the oral motor device / chewy tubes should be made to monitor the state and hygiene of the chewy. (Cleaning should follow advice from Trust policy NTW(C)23, Infection, prevention and control policy, practice guidance note - IPC-PGN-10 – Medical Devices and Equipment – Cleaning and Decontamination. The use of detergent wipes/hot soapy water followed by a rinse should be used to clean the device).
- Single patient use of the oral motor device/chewy tube, should always be followed.
- Parental/Carer discussion should support all interventions to use an oral motor device / chewy tube. Instruction needs to include cost, sustainability, use, benefits and risks.

4. **CLINICAL USE OF EQUIPMENT**

4.1 **Practice of Biting and Chewing Skills**

4.1.1 For individuals who require oral exercise and practice to assist eating and desensitisation the oral motor device / chewy tube can be used to support sessional planned practice.

4.2 **An Alternative to Inappropriate Biting and Chewing**

4.2.1 Where individuals seek objects to bite, chew or ingest that are inappropriate it may be clinically advisable to provide an oral motor device / chewy tube as a safer alternative to unsafe environmental objects.

4.2.2 In this instance the Clinical Team will decide upon the use of oral motor device / chewy tubes for this type of clinical provision.

4.2.3 Indeed it is not always clear if the function of chewing/biting behaviour may be sensory (proprioceptive or gustatory) or otherwise.

4.3 **Sensory and Proprioceptive Purpose**

4.3.1 There is no qualitative or quantitative clinical evidence that supports the use of oral motor devices for tactile stimulation or proprioceptive input. However, there is a wealthy set of references for the use of oral motor devices / chewy tubes being used in a number of clinical settings and sensory integration programmes – for the purpose of sensory and proprioceptive feedback.
4.3.2  The NTW Sensory Integration Reference Group cannot advocate the prescription of oral motor devices for this purpose. However, in the situation of an individual being referred to Inpatient Services, already prescribed with an oral motor device/cheewy tube, where it is deemed appropriate that the device should continue to be used for sensory purposes, the following aspects will need to be addressed:

- Agreement of continued use by the Multi-disciplinary Team which would consider both clinical and financial viability of the use of the oral motor device.
- Alternative tools and strategies other than the use of the oral motor devices.
- Care Plan and guidance for use of the Oral motor device / Chewy Tube.
- Appropriate risk assessment.
- Supervision by a Module 1 trained SI Network Occupational Therapist.

5.  ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

5.1  This guidance has been complied by the Sensory Integration Reference Group.

6.  REFERENCES

- Jaw Rehab Program  - The Jaw Rehabilitation Program is a patented step-by-step series of goals and objectives designed to develop biting and chewing skills. The Jaw Rehabilitation Program offers a sequenced progression of treatment exercises to initiate and strengthen mandibular function needed for successful mastication skill. (Speech Pathology Association)

- Scheer, C. R. Perspectives on an Oral Motor Activity: The Use of Rubber Tubing as a ‘Chewy’. The American Journal Of Occupational Therapy, April 1992, Volume 46, No. 4

7  DEFINITION OF TERMS

- The gustatory system is the sensory system for the sense of taste
- The Proprioceptive system is the body position sense. Where our body parts are in space, perceived touch and pressure, where a specific body part is.