2.5. Knowledge of learning disability

- An ability to draw on knowledge that children/young people with a learning disability:
  - will have a reduced intellectual ability, so may have difficulty with everyday activities
  - will tend to take longer to learn and may need support to develop new skills
  - will have difficulty understanding new or complicated information
  - may have difficulty interacting with other people
- An ability to draw on knowledge that learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) are not a learning disability because these conditions do not affect intellect

- An ability to draw on knowledge that a learning disability happens when brain damage occurs either before or during birth, or in early childhood (e.g. maternal illness during pregnancy, anoxia during birth, genetic factors, childhood injury or childhood illness)
- An ability to draw on knowledge of conditions that can co-occur with learning disability, e.g. Down syndrome, autism or cerebral palsy

- An ability to draw on knowledge that a learning disability can be mild, moderate, severe or profound, but in all cases is lifelong
- An ability to draw on knowledge that the level of support someone with a learning disability needs depends on the severity of the disability and the individual, e.g.:
  - a child/young person with a mild learning disability may only need minimal help with specific issues
  - a child/young person with a severe or profound learning disability may need full-time care and support with every aspect of their life, and may also have physical disabilities

- An ability to draw on knowledge that a mild learning disability may not be detected or responded to because the child/young person may mix well with others and cope with most everyday tasks, but may need support in specific areas of their life

Communicating with children/young people with a learning disability

- An ability to draw on knowledge that the linguistic and cognitive abilities of children/young people with a learning disability will vary considerably from person to person, but that they may have specific communication difficulties, e.g.:
  - difficulty understanding abstract concepts
  - unclear speech
  - a need for more time to process and retrieve information
  - a limited vocabulary

	■ be prone to suggestibility (they may change their answers in response to feedback)
	■ be prone to acquiescence (they may tend to answer 'yes' to questions)
	■ struggle to express themselves, and become frustrated by this
■	An ability to draw on knowledge that children/young people with learning disabilities may have acquired social strategies to help them 'mask' their difficulties understanding and following verbal communication

■	An ability to address any difficulties the child/young person has in communicating by making appropriate adjustments, e.g.:
	■ listening carefully and asking them to clarify or repeat information if necessary
	■ allowing time for them to respond
	■ using simple, straightforward language
	■ limiting the number of key concepts or ideas that are communicated in a sentence
	■ using concrete examples (rather than abstract ideas)
	■ asking short, simple 'either/or' questions (taking care to avoid leading questions)
	■ creating a context for comments (i.e. to orient the person to the reasons for comments or questions)
	■ regularly asking them to summarise or repeat what has been discussed (to check that it has been accurately understood)