5.2. Ability to contribute to maintaining a therapeutic social environment (therapeutic milieu)

- An ability to draw on knowledge that a therapeutic milieu is one where the overall environment aims to make a positive contribution to improving wellbeing and functioning
- An ability to draw on knowledge that (alongside interventions included in a care plan) a therapeutic milieu aims to help children/young people practice new ways of coping through interactions with others (including peers and staff), with a sense of safety and support, and is characterised by:
  - the ward as a social community
  - a clear structure with routines (e.g. daily activities, mealtimes, and free time), as well as staff-led input (both individual and group)
  - expectations of behaviour that are not too restrictive, and that are clearly explained, including limits that are consistently maintained (but balanced with individual need)
  - helping children/young people understand what will be expected of them and what they can expect from others
  - helping children/young people cooperate and support each other in making day-to-day decisions about ward functioning, and:
    - staff developing a sense of shared responsibility and mutual respect with the children/young people
    - regular opportunities for staff and children/young people to spend positive, developmentally appropriate, playful time together, and engage in normal activities and conversations
    - consistent interpersonal boundaries, in which staff behave predictably and reliably, and role-model positive behaviours
    - staff who can move flexibly between positions of 'professional helper' and 'being human' in response to children/young people's needs
    - helping children/young people attend to their daily living needs (washing, personal care, and physical health and wellbeing)
- An ability to draw on knowledge that an effective therapeutic milieu depends on a well-functioning and confident staff team

- An ability to draw on knowledge that the therapeutic milieu is influenced by people who are not present (including family/carers) and to find ways to recognise their roles, and to respond to their needs and contributions at different stages of an admission