

**Profound** – People with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities, or profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), can be some of the most disabled individuals in our communities. In addition, they may have multiple disabilities, which can include impairments of vision, hearing and movement as well as other challenges such as epilepsy and autism. Most people in this group need support with mobility and many have complex health needs requiring extensive support. People with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities may have considerable difficulty communicating. Many people express themselves through non-verbal means, or at most through using a few words or symbols. In addition some people need support with behaviour that is seen as challenging, such as self-injury.

**Severe** – People with a severe learning disability often use basic words and gestures to communicate their needs. Many need a high level of support with everyday activities such as cooking, budgeting, cleaning and shopping, but many can look after some if not all of their own personal care needs. Some people have additional medical needs and some need support with mobility issues.

**Moderate** – People with a moderate learning disability are likely to have some language skills that mean they can communicate about their day to day needs and wishes. People may need some support with caring for themselves, but many will be able to carry out day to day tasks with support.

**Mild** – A person who is said to have a mild learning disability is usually able to hold a conversation, and communicate most of their needs and wishes. They may need some support to understand abstract or complex ideas. People are often independent in caring for themselves and doing many everyday tasks. They usually have some basic reading and writing skills. People with a mild learning disability quite often go undiagnosed. Most people still need appropriate support with tasks such as budgeting and completing forms. Using labels for learning disabilities can be both helpful and unhelpful at the same time. It can be helpful to the person, their family or those people who work with them to understand their needs and what support they might need. However, the categories can be unhelpful if the person with the learning disability is just seen as that label, for example ‘profound learning disability’.