

Survey report - Refurbishment of The Falls Play Area in Richmond

North Yorkshire Council is working on a project to improve the quality of The Falls Play Area in Richmond. Currently there is a limited range of play equipment and some unused space on the play area site which we feel would benefit from some up-to-date play equipment.

This consultation report will be used to create a wish list for the design brief and will influence the final decision and help create the most suitable design for the play area.

The online survey was open from Friday 13 December 2024 until Wednesday 3 February 2025, available on North Yorkshire Council's consultations web page. Posters were put up locally around Richmond and details of the survey were sent to local schools, leisure centre, community centres and posted on various local Facebook pages. Paper copies of the survey were also available at Richmond Library.

Headline Results

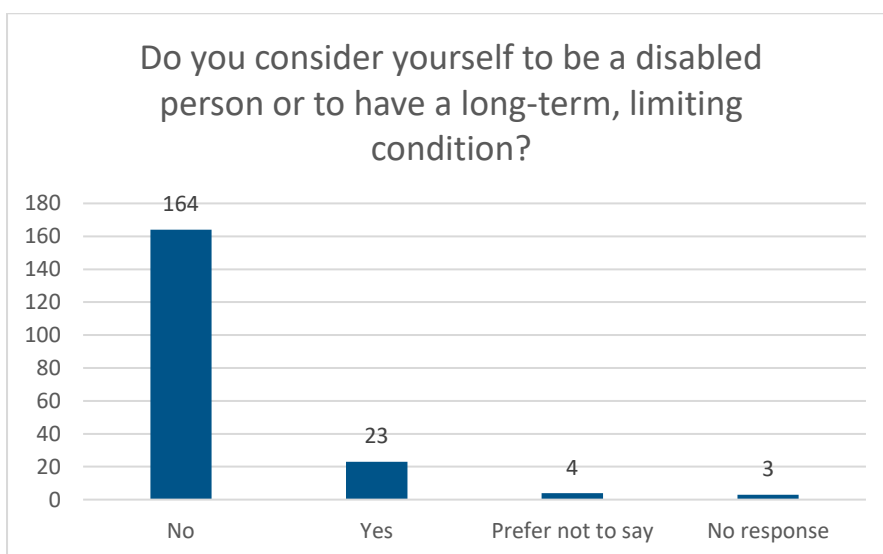
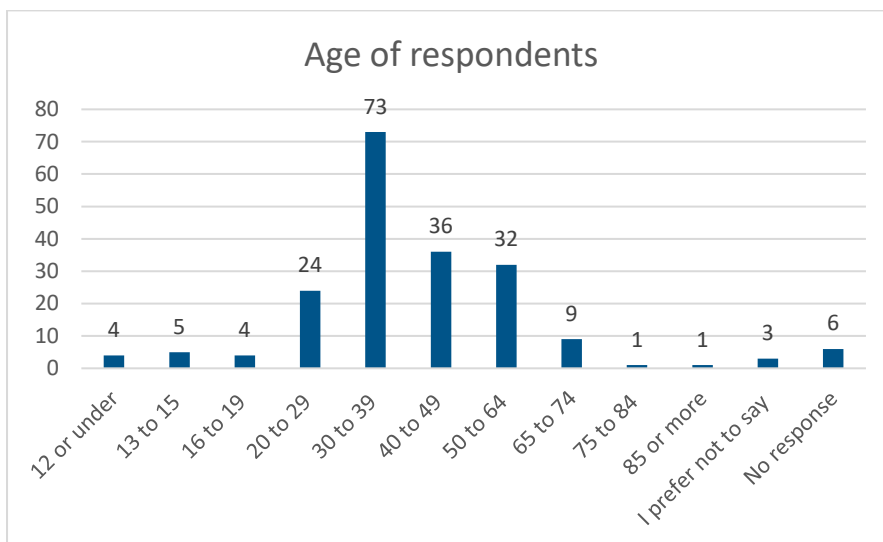
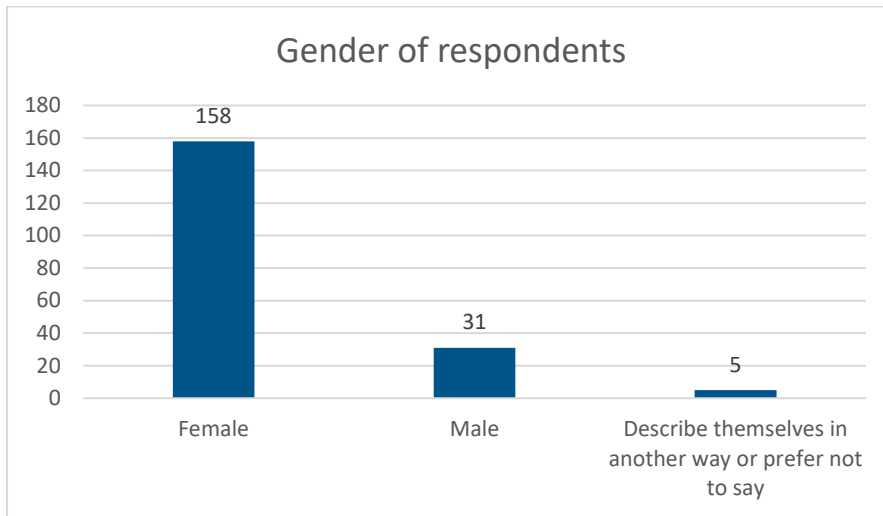
- 194 respondents in total.
- 84% of respondents were aged between 20 and 64.
- 81% of respondents were female.
- 39% of respondents use the play area, 35% are residents who also use the play area, 25% are residents but do not use the play area.
- 74% of respondents live within 30 minutes walk from the play area, the remaining 26% live more than half an hour walk away or didn't respond.
- 35% of respondents use the play area monthly, 24% every 6 months, 13% weekly, 8% fortnightly, 6% annually and only 1% daily. 11% have never used the play area.
- 77% of respondents spend less than an hour in the play area, 15% spend between 1 and 2 hours, 1% spend longer than 2 hours.
- Swinging, sliding and climbing are particularly important for respondents, followed by exploring, balancing, jumping and spinning, with hanging, imagining, learning interacting and crawling following closely behind.
- 35% of respondents prefer bright colours, 31% watery colours, 30% natural colours.
- The majority of respondents feel the equipment should cater for ages 0 -12 years. Only 12% would like it to cater for 13 -16 years old.
- Supportive swings, sensory play, accessible climbing frames and wheelchair accessible roundabouts were the most popular, with visual play and play panels not so popular.
- Benches, seating and picnic tables were more important than textured pathways or wheelchair/pushchair parking areas.
- Climbing/bouldering were very popular and springies were not very popular with respondents.
- 62% of respondents would like to see a themed play area, 36% would not.
- 38% would prefer a castle theme, 36% River or boat theme and 24% animal or nature theme.

Other comments

- Very busy and well-used in summer months but not well used in winter due to poor conditions.
- Better maintenance required all year round.
- The existing steps within the play area are unsafe and too large for smaller children and are in poor condition.
- The play area is very shaded, dark, and damp due to its location under trees. It suffers from moss and algae, making play equipment and pathways slippery and often covered in leaves, creating a muddy hazard.
- More accessible equipment needed, especially for wheelchair users, such as swings, slides, basket swings, roundabouts, and climbing frames.
- Request for more equipment that meets the needs of a broader range of special educational needs and disabilities.
- Multiple requests for a zip wire and climbing wall/nets/frame.
- Other requests for water/splash park, quiet area, hiding area, or tunnels, playhouse, teepee, den, tent, treehouse, interactive/instrumental panels, trampoline, seesaw, ping pong, mud kitchen, football, sandpit, glitter path, grass hill for rolling down, assault course/Parkour, skate/pump track.
- Accessible for all ages and abilities and have separate areas for different ages,
- Slide - people commented that the existing slide is particularly good.
- Seating - better seating/picnic/BBQ area and covered seating.
- Baby swings and slide with low ramps and steps for younger children.
- Other play area recommendations include Bamburgh, Paddy Freeman's Park in Newcastle, French Rd at Catterick Garrison, Shawl in Leyburn, Hope Town in Darlington, Ronaldshay Park, Lady Serena's play area, Clifton Park in Rotherham, the water play area at Washington Wetland Trust, sand pit area at Wentworth Gardens Centre, and parks in Australia and New Zealand.
- Wildlife-friendly area, area to learn about wildlife, and include sensory/edible planting area.
- Castle and River theme in keeping with Richmond. Also suggestion to use stone buildings in the play area as a castle.
- Suggestion to include local artist Chris Layfield with his doodle art.
- Animal-shaped bins that gobble rubbish. Note that bins get raided by squirrels, seagulls and crows.
- Better directional signage to the play area and signage regarding dogs at the play area.
- Area to park bikes/scooters and tie up dogs.
- Level area so it's not so steep/hilly.
- Request for a zebra crossing and consideration of road safety when entering/exiting the site.
- Some prefer to do nothing or spend money on other priorities such as roads and drains, benches by the riverside or housing estates in areas of need instead of for tourists.

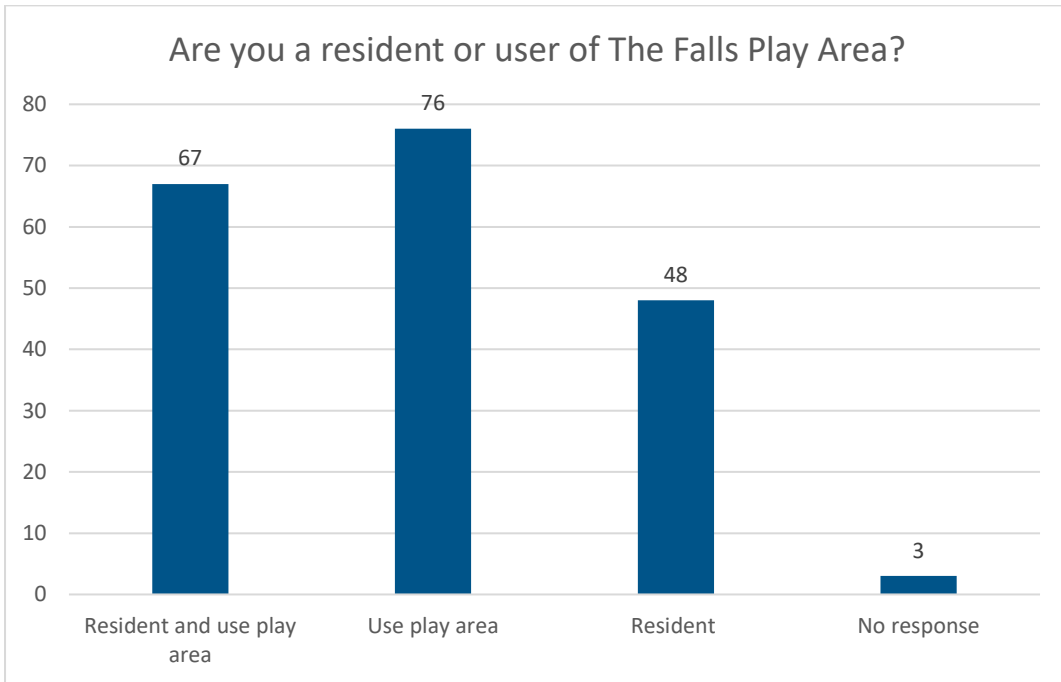
About the respondents

There were 194 respondents in total. 84% of respondents were aged between 20 and 64 (more likely to have children/grandchildren of the age using play facilities). 81% of respondents were female, 16% male and 3% described themselves in another way or prefer not to say. 12% of respondents consider themselves to be a disabled person or have a long term, limiting condition and 3% prefer not to say or didn't respond.



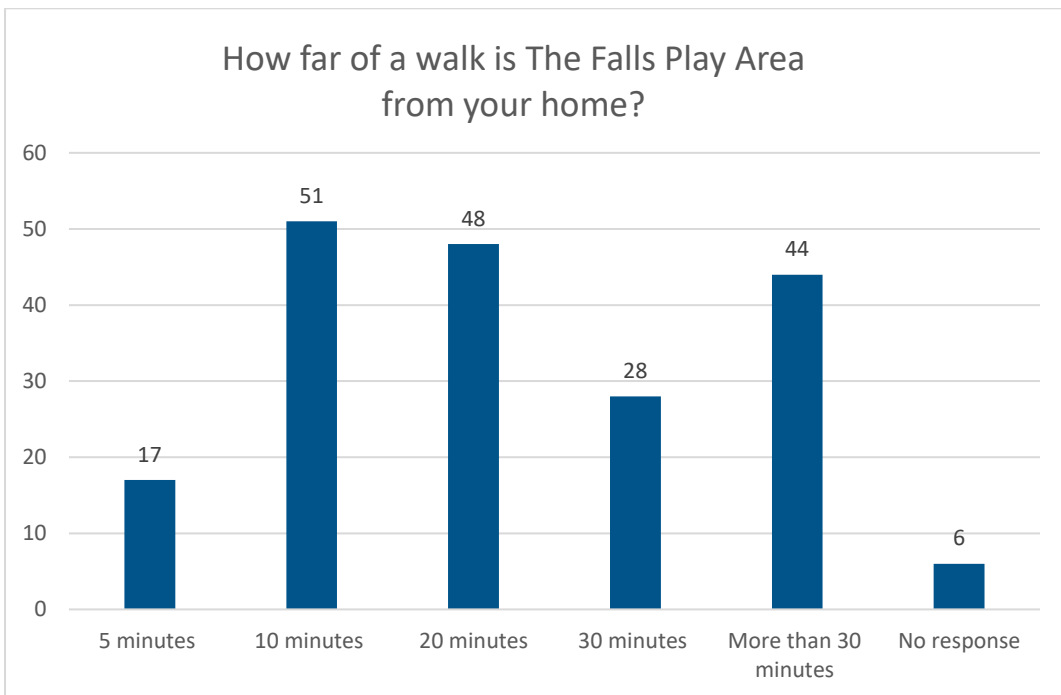
Are you a resident or user of The Falls Play Area?

39% of respondents use the play area, 35% are residents who also use the play area, 25% are residents and 1% didn't respond.



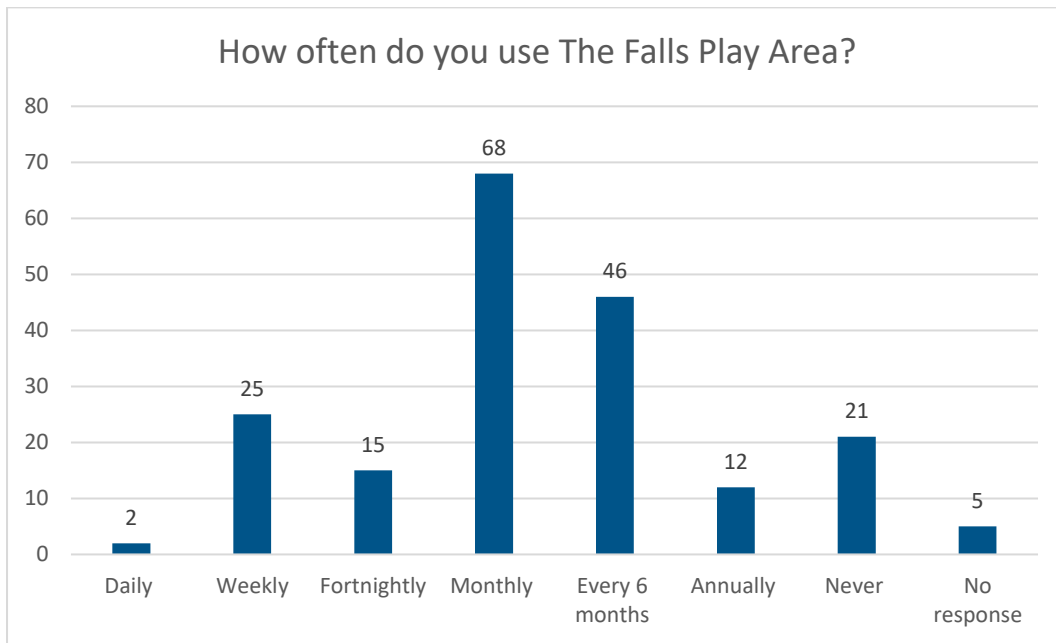
How far of a walk is The Falls Play Area from your home?

74% of respondents live within 30 minutes walk from the play area, the remaining 26% live more than half an hour walk away or didn't respond.



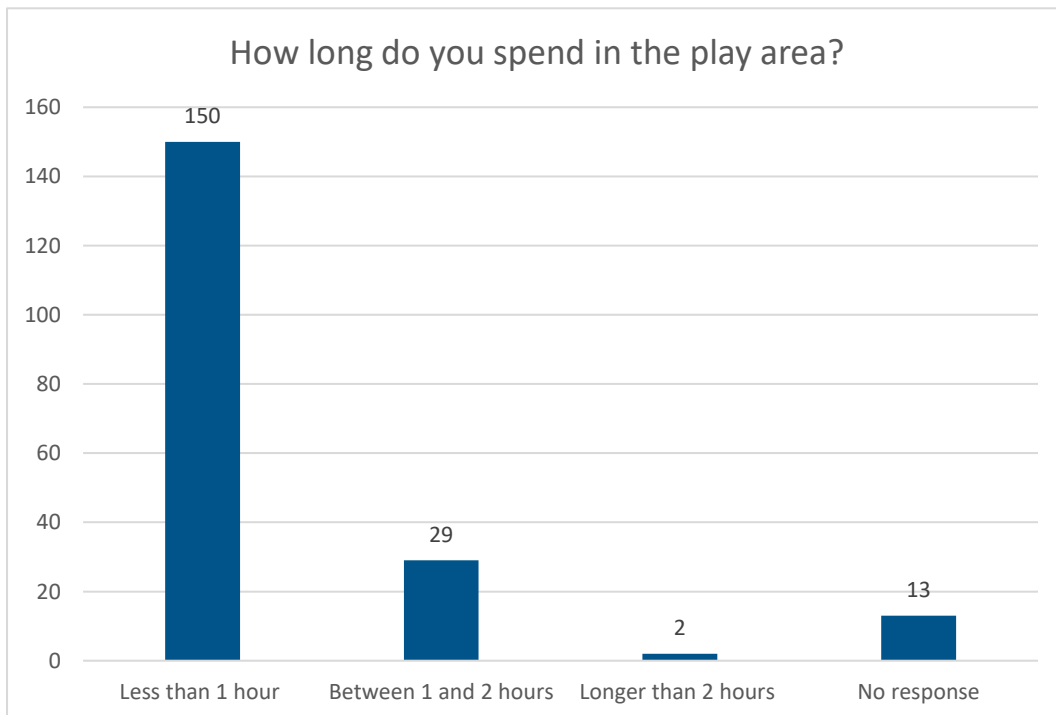
How often do you use The Falls Play Area?

35% of respondents use the play area monthly, 24% every 6 months, 13% weekly, 8% fortnightly, 6% annually and only 1% daily. 11% have never used the play area and 2% didn't respond.



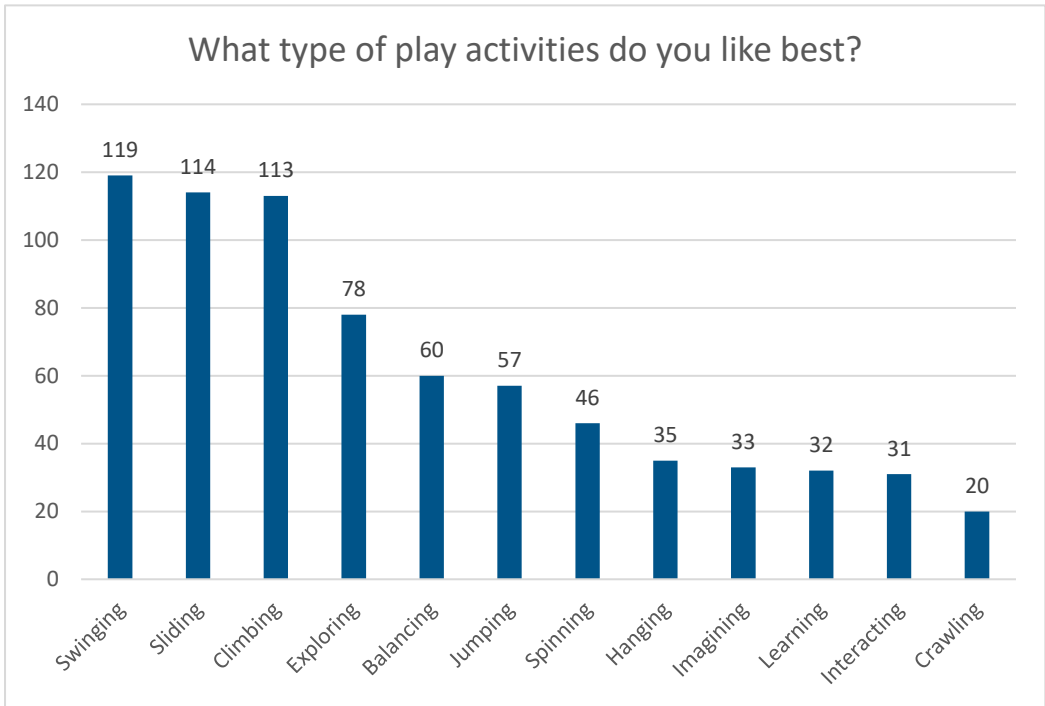
How long do you spend in the play area?

77% of respondents spend less than an hour in the play area, 15% spend between 1 and 2 hours, 1% spend longer than 2 hours and 7% didn't respond.



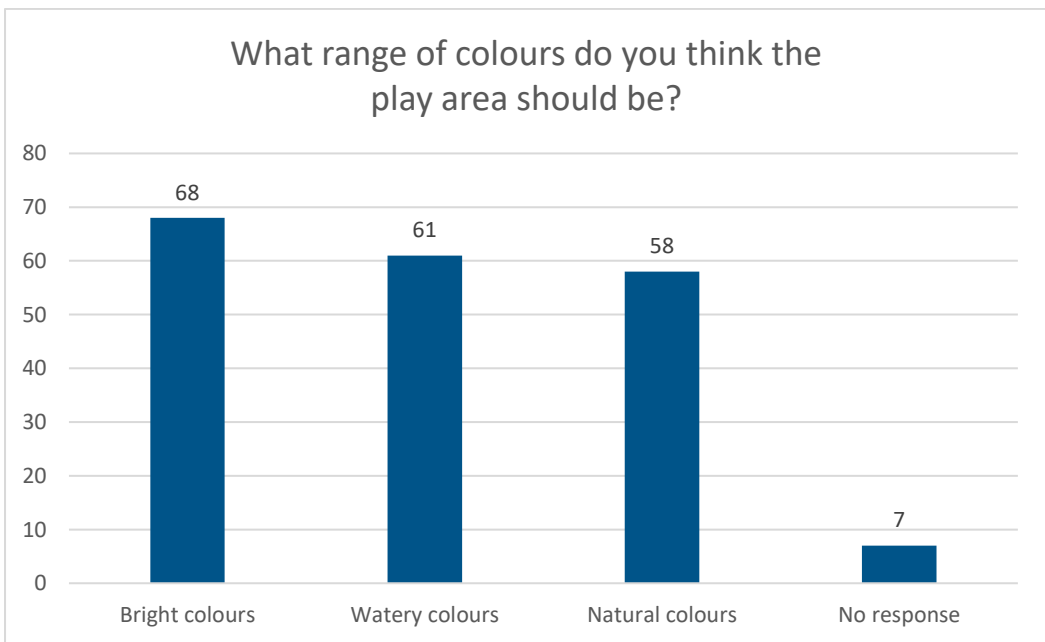
What type of play activities do you like best?

Swinging, Sliding and climbing are particularly important for respondents, followed by exploring, balancing, jumping and spinning, with hanging, imagining, learning interacting and crawling following closely behind.



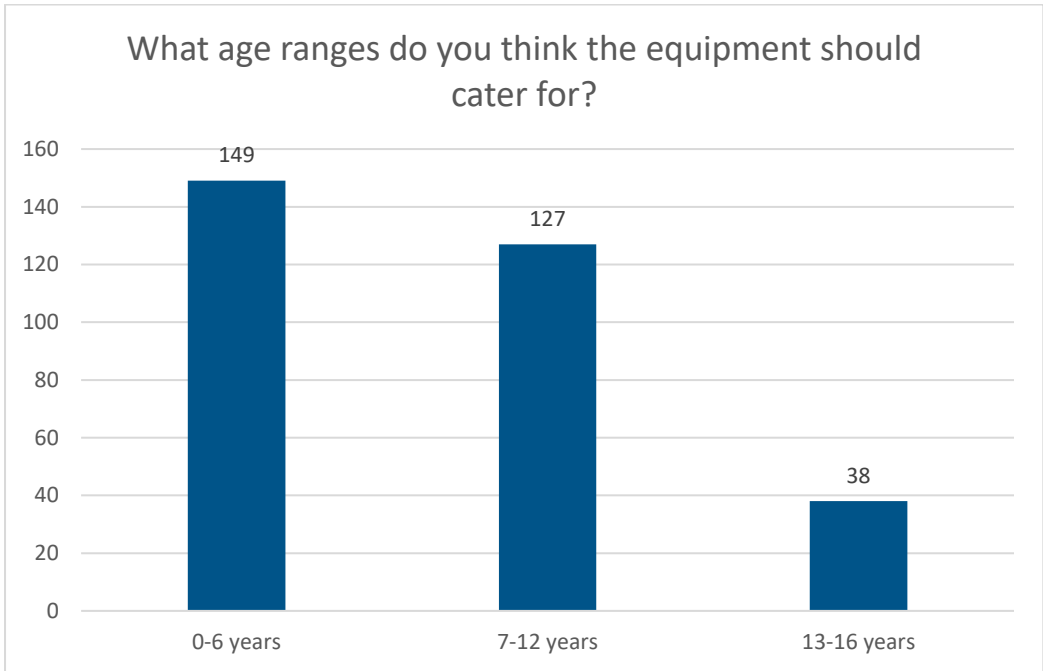
What range of colours do you think the play area should be?

35% of respondents prefer bright colours, 31% watery colours, 30% natural colours and 4% didn't respond.



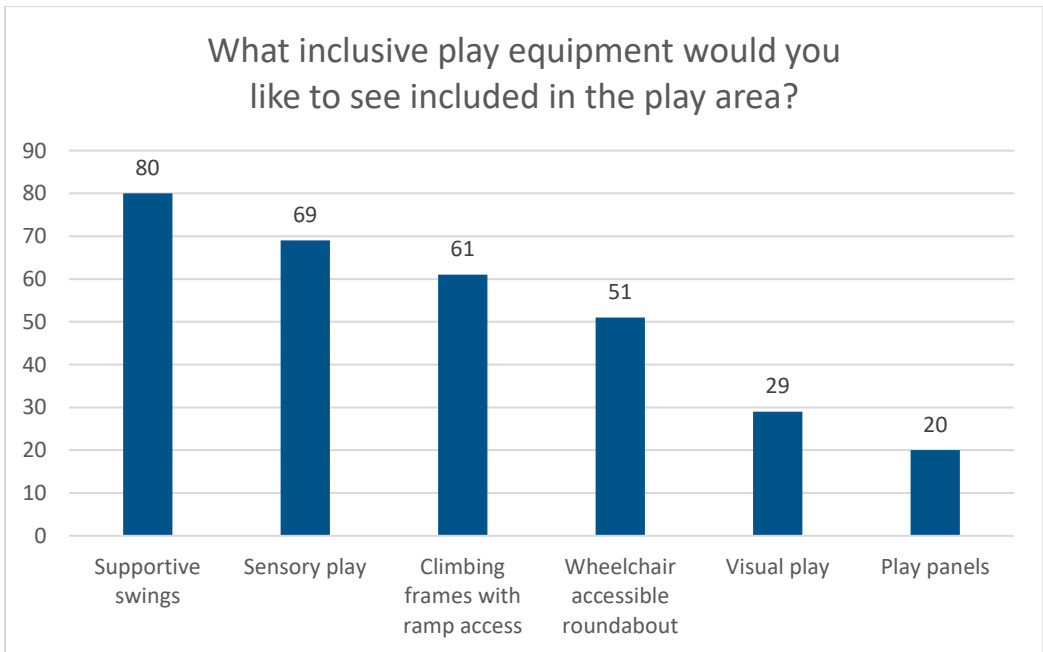
What age ranges do you think the equipment should cater for?

The majority of respondents feel the equipment should cater for ages 0 -12 years. Only 12% would like it to cater for 13 -16 years old.



What inclusive play equipment would you like to see included in the play area?

Supportive swings, sensory play, accessible climbing frames and wheelchair accessible roundabouts were the most popular, with visual play and play panels not so popular.

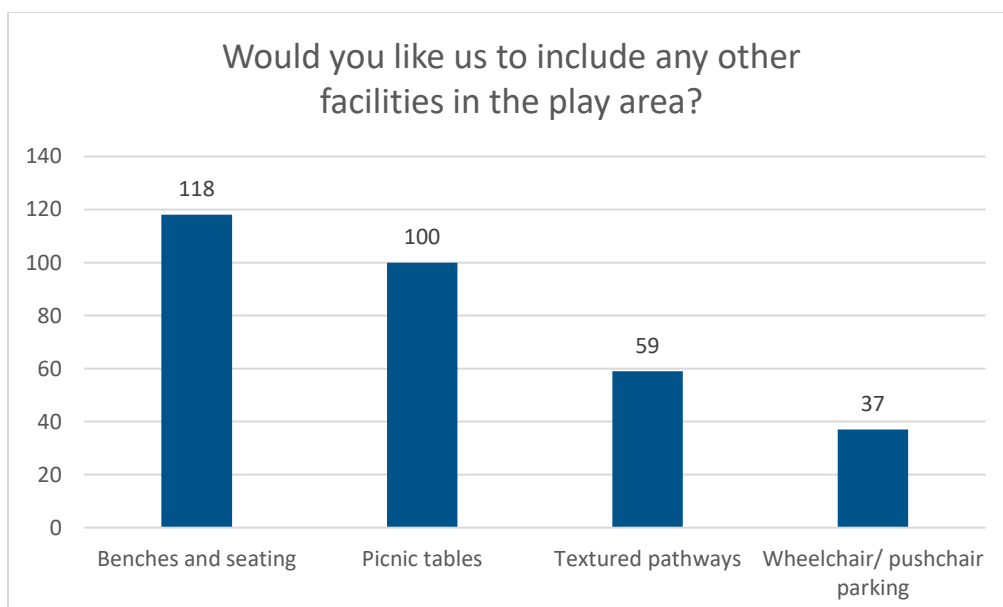


Other suggestions were...

Maybe an underground hiding area for children with sensory Autism. To avoid overstimulation
Seating area and wildflower planting
For adults too, in Hong Kong they have bars and frames for adults to do pull ups and dips, there could also be parkour jumps, and monkey bars for coordination. This would suit teenagers and smaller children too.
Water play area
There is some excellent equipment available. Accessible swings, space for wheelchairs on roundabouts and ramped access to some climbing frames. Check the work done by North East Family Fun. www.northeastfamilyfun.co.uk . Bamburgh playground is a good example of what can be done.
Zip line
Sheltered areas/ tunnels
Skatepark
Be good if the playground had some more seating for parents, grandparents or areas of reflection for all.
Zip wire
Water park on the lower section and play equipment wooden castle! on the hill
Some suggestions are seating and eating areas for parents and families, sheltered areas, a mixture of slides for different ages. Floor trampoline, wheelchair access roundabout and some swings. Animal education themes. There are plenty of inspirational theme parks that have some great spaces that are small in size, that children are drawn to. Including an artificial grass hill that children can roll down seen at Stockeld Park, glitter footpaths for toddlers. If you stop and actually look at what's being used the most and by who, it's not hard to get ideas and see problem areas. i.e. steps too big for smaller children or too far for children to walk, so take shortcuts and damage verges etc. please see https://www.ted.com/talks/mara_mintzer_how_kids_can_help_design_cities?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare
Wheelchair swings. Lots in other countries, why not here?
Seesaw
Play house with seats and table for creative den based play. Could do as part of a climbing frame or built into the edge of the steep banks. Suggest castle themed.
Wheelchair swing, accessible climbing frame/slide (wide slide, low to the ground), wheelchair accessible roundabout.

Would you like us to include any other facilities in the play area?

Benches, seating and picnic tables were more popular than textured pathways or wheelchair/pushchair parking areas.

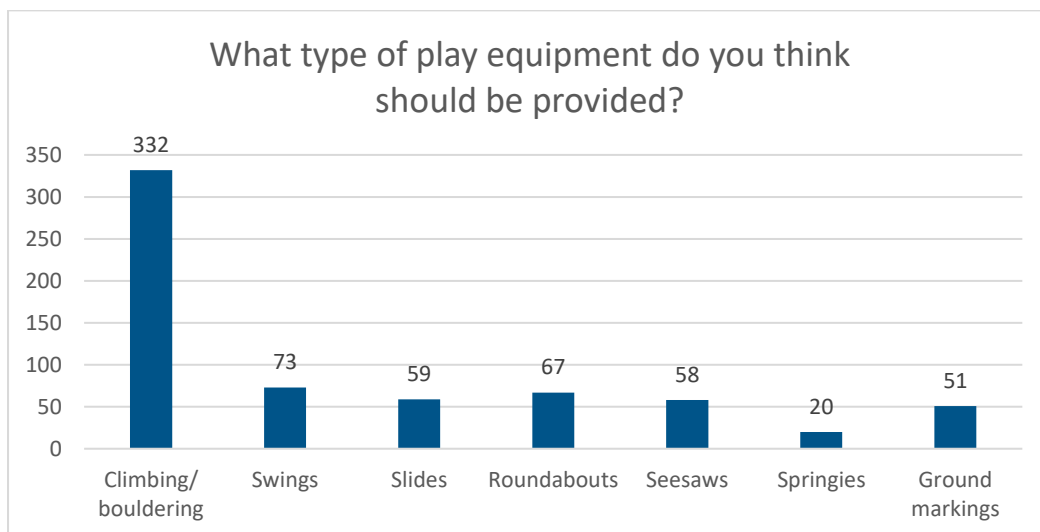


Other suggestions were...

Zip line
Wildlife friendly
Rabbit tunnel through hill
Sandpit. Must be more (extensive) signage that NO DOGS ALLOWED. Benches for parents. Trees to be cut back to avoid so much lichen on floor
A fig room
Area for bikes, scooters and to tie up dogs
Big climbing frames
Splash park
Bark chips or soft flooring to eradicate muddy grass slopes
Skatepark
Mud kitchen
Covered picnic area.
Some suggestions are seating and eating areas for parents and families, sheltered areas, a mixture of slides for different ages. Floor trampoline, wheelchair access roundabout and some swings. Animal education themes. There are plenty of inspirational theme parks that have some great spaces that are small in size, that children are drawn to. Including an artificial grass hill that children can roll down seen at Stockeld Park, glitter footpaths for toddlers. If you stop and actually look at what's being used the most and by who, it's not hard to get ideas and see problem areas. I.e. steps too big for smaller children or too far for children to walk, so take shortcuts and damage verges etc. please see https://www.ted.com/talks/mara_mintzer_how_kids_can_help_design_cities?utm_campaign=teditspread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=teditcomshare
Outdoor musical instruments fixed to the ground eg. xylophone, tubular bells, drums
Please have a look at parks in Australia for inspiration, they are fantastic for all children
Lots of animal shaped bins. (the animal gobbles up the litter, encouraging use)
A small mud kitchen area
Dog place to tie dogs
Football
Park needs slides swings climbing frames and picnic benches

What type of play equipment do you think should be provided?

Climbing/bouldering were very popular and springies were not very popular with respondents.

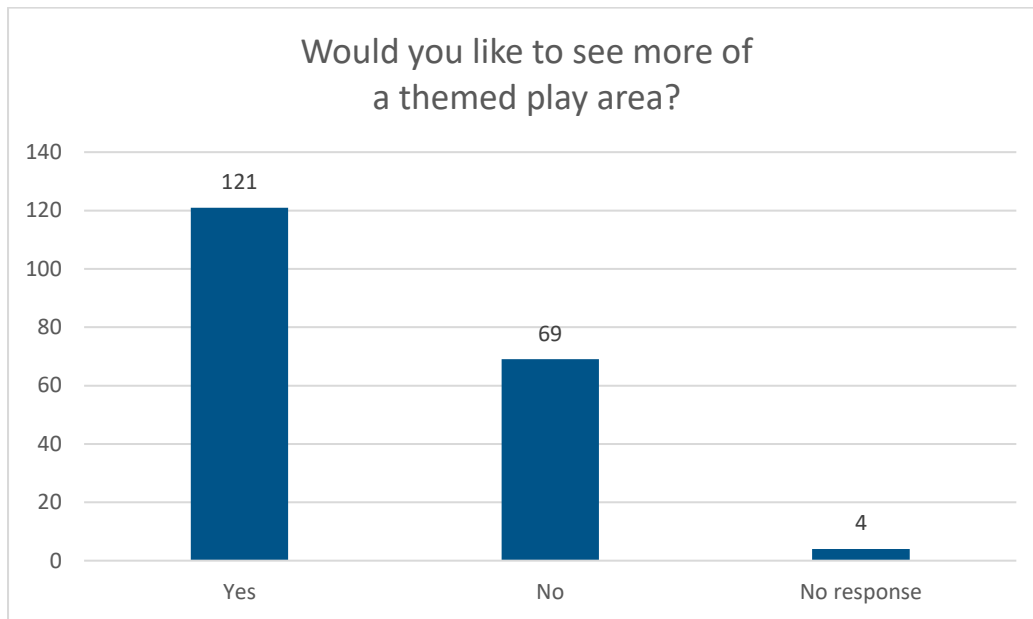


Other suggestions were...

A good climbing wall, ping pong table
Slide with ramps and low steps for very young children. Similar to French Road Catterick Garrison
Sensory areas for disabled children
None
There are excellent wooden constructions can be bought. Eg. a wooden castle would tie in with Richmond castle or a pirate ship to tie with the river. Hopetown in Darlington, Paddy Freeman's park in Newcastle and Bamburgh playground have been recently refurbished and all include these which are popular these days. Better than springies slides etc as they encourage imagination
Assault course
Accessible swings everything not just swing like most places
Zip line
Zip line
Trampolines
Zip wire / sand pit
please install a ground trampoline
A wooden playhouse or teepee. Something you can go inside etc
Dens/ tents and insects learning areas. Look to Hopetown Darlington for inspiration
Zip line
Imaginative play equipment for example wooden teepees, tunnels and boats
Skatepark
Trampoline
Some suggestions are seating and eating areas for parents and families, sheltered areas, a mixture of slides for different ages. Floor trampoline, wheelchair access roundabout and some swings. Animal education themes, there are plenty of inspirational theme parks that have some great spaces that are small in size, that children are drawn to. Including an artificial grass hill that children can roll down seen at Stockeld Park, glitter footpaths for toddlers. If you stop and actually look at what's being used the most and by who, it's not hard to get ideas and see problem areas. I.e. steps too big for smaller children or too far for children to walk, so take shortcuts and damage verges etc. please see https://www.ted.com/talks/mara_mintzer_how_kids_can_help_design_cities?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare
Zipline
Zip line
Zip line
Skate park, pump track for the older kids. The younger ones have plenty.
Something for cycling scooting, but all general playground. But we don't go as much as my child slipped on the surface with moss and damp
Zip wire

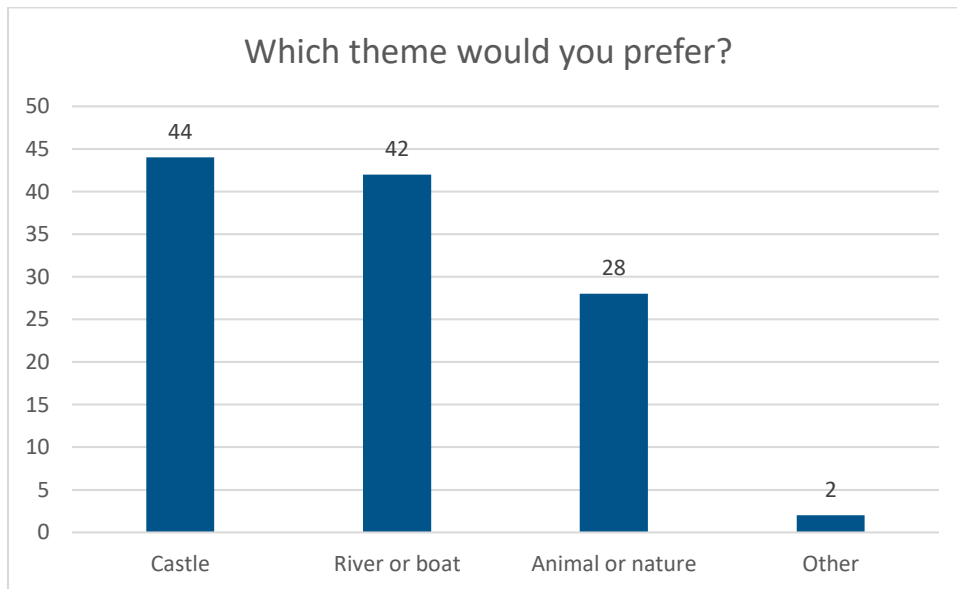
Would you like to see more of a themed play area?

62% of respondents would like to see a themed play area, 36% would not and 2% didn't respond.



Which theme would you prefer?

38% would prefer a castle theme, 36% River or boat theme and 24% animal or nature theme and 2% had other suggestions.



Other suggestions were...

Water splash area
Themed around the heritage of Richmond - tale of drummer boy etc

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for the play area?

There were over 100 additional comments/suggestions about The Falls Play Area which can be read in full below.

Zip line Climbing frame
Due to the location under trees the existing play area is very shaded and the suffers from moss and algae making play equipment and pathways slippery. Could the tree canopy be cut back to improve natural daylight into the play area and could footpaths be installed which do not become slippery when wet and damp. The sloping grass area is very steep and children easily slip and fall getting wet and dirty. Could a more suitable non-slip surface or climbing equipment be installed into the bank. Could a zebra crossing or similar be installed to the park entrances as the footpaths are on the opposite side of the road.
I think it should be catered for slightly older kids as the other play area is more kiddie focused
Trees need to be cut right back, as at the moment the area stays very damp with lots of moss, it becomes very slippy and its a hazard
Possibly railings outside if the park to prevent children running out
Litter bins in park and enclosed gates as road nearby. More signage with directions for play park near falls area so people know it's there.
This area has always suffered from lack of maintenance. The tables etc need to be painted and cleaned annually!
Somewhere for young adults to gather, a covered seating area
The play area should be accessible to all, many people with sensory needs like climbing so this would cater for adults people with adhd and autism. this would maximise usage and people could include it on their daily walk. We walk past the falls every day and think its a shame that none of the play parks in Richmond are accessible to all including adults to stay fit, there's some equipment in the park near cricket club but it wasn't thought out and I don't see it getting used and isn't particularly useful. Advertise the opportunity to coproduce play park by having a design meeting in person rather than just a survey. Make it something that other councils look at Richmond as a leader, not designing something old fashioned for little children. Also could design somewhere else in Richmond as a play park for dogs to do agility training, as this would encourage owners to get fit running around course with dogs. I saw one on holiday in Croatia and i thought it was a brilliant idea, and kids were running around with their dogs and interacting positively.
Steps up hill to current swing. Wheelchair inclusive items.
Don't waste space in here on an outdoor gym- nobody uses them and there is one by the bowling club already. A water play area (see Washington Wetland Trust for an example) would also be a great addition
It would be great if it could be levelled a bit more. The floor surface needs consideration as it gets VERY slippery in winter due to the lichen. We are regular users and would use it at lot more if there was more facilities. I think swings and a climbing frame would be key additions. The park should be focussed at under 12s to ensure anti-social behaviour isn't encouraged More bins in the park would be useful as it suffers from litter. There can also be dog poo in there so more signage banning dogs (owners can be so selfish!) How can you get more sunshine in the area? Could the old building be re-used for a castle to explore or similar Climbing nets
Water splash play area somewhere in Richmond, swings
I strongly object to this development and this survey. The survey is clearly designed to restrict responses and direct the development in a predetermined direction. In an options appraisal "do nothing" should always be an option. This is my preferred option as someone who lives in one of the houses closest to this area and passes regularly. It is in perfectly serviceable condition, which is more than can be said for the roads and drains. The bench by the riverside are in much poorer condition and should be a greater priority. Get your priorities straight and stop wasting our money. Mothers aren't the only ones who vote.
I hate this park it sucks go home
With the river and batts area nearby children have opportunities to run around and enjoy the open air. I think priority in the play area should be given to younger children who cannot be left unsupervised near the river in the same way. A themed boat or castle using wood would be appropriate. I have included examples of parks where these are used very successfully in my earlier responses. Bamburgh play area has a pirate ship and also a tractor which might fit with the agricultural area. The area can get damp and slippery so it's important to think about this when considering materials to be used. I would avoid incorporating any enclosed spaces/ dens due to the squirrels and other possible vermin that can be around especially if food is left. Similarly, bins get raided by seagulls and crows. It will be important to keep the access onto the road safe. Please do look at the Bamburgh playpark online which is popular, well used, clean and safe. It also appears to have been well researched and has received positive feedback.
A very well used facility, especially in summer. A benefit for both residents and tourism.

Better surface as it gets very boggy which makes it not very nice to use in the colder wetter months.
If there options to link the area to the environment, area for picnics or a BBQ as in the summer to go to the river but if the park was upgraded then it would provide a longer and richer experience down there
Accessibility key think about a child in a wheelchair not being able to sit up not being able to play and having to sit in the chair while everyone's playing in the playback it's horrible to see our child do that allow accessibility to swings being able to go on to climb friends allows him to be a child all children in all areas should have
Keeping it to a good standard, sign posting it from town, advertising it
The park could use baby swings& it to be a play area to cater the younger kids that visit with their families.
Currently the flooring is very slippery when it is wet, please use different flooring which has a little more grip
A castle themed park featuring natural/ river colours would nicely reflect the local area and help to bring families/ tourists to the town. The topography of the play area is a huge advantage to think laterally about the play equipment & make it more exciting for children of different ages. It will be important to make sure the park is not underwhelming (which it currently is) as it certainly puts families off heading down to the river more regularly.
It should be in keeping with the area, have plenty of seating and be accessible to all. Use some of the natural features (such as hills)
The flooring needs to be changed as it gets so incredibly slippery with moss and when wet. The slide is pretty much the only good thing about it
This play area is always green and slippery so this needs to be considered and addressed in the first instance. There is a lot of wasted and inaccessible space and the equipment is really only suitable to younger children. It's quite boring currently too you need to make it more imaginative and inviting. Link it to its natural surroundings of the town, the ruined castle and the waterfalls. Inspire imaginative play. Children are enticed by bright colours usually but theming it to make it more woodland might actually be more appropriate and fitting to the area.
Extra cleaning and maintenance. Previously the hygiene and up keep of the park has been neglected making people not want to go in due to the state of it. I think deep cleaning and up keep of the outside area would be very important for the health and safety of the children
A zip wire would be a wonderful addition. I would suggest keeping the current slide though as it is very popular and my daughter says it's the best slide in the world.
A small area with appropriate swings and climbing frame for 0-3 (one that can be used, not have massive gaps they can fall through whilst being independent) and a separate area for older children with a bigger frame and seated swings.
Needs lot of different options for different types of children
The ground needs to be even. At the moment it's a falls hazard with the uneven floor. The steps are uneven and hard to navigate for some children to get to the slide. More wheelchair friendly play equipment like a roundabout. More equipment for babies and toddlers.
It's very minimal and dull sadly I wouldn't go out my way to go there. The benches and seating area are always covered in bird poo.
The steps to the slide need to be fixed as these are falling apart and can be a trip hazard. A trampoline installed into the ground would be very popular amongst children. There is one in Northallerton, and even grown-ups enjoy it! Swings for older children and disabled children should be included. A castle-themed playground would be great. Perhaps replicating Richmond Castle.
Something for pre school age children too. Interactive play, safe paths, natural colours, picnic benches, toddler age climbing frame
Love the big slide but the steps to it are terrible and need work. The gate onto the roadway needs work on the river entrance. Main thing it it always feels and looks damp and grimy. Probably due to the tree coverage but i've never once seen anyone there doing maintenance other than strimming grass.
We use this park with our SEND groups from Mowbray School. It is a perfect venue as we can link it to walks in the park and is close by to the toilets. Having a park that would meet the needs of a broader range of SEND needs would be fantastic. There are a lot of slippy banks in this park, so doing something with the layout would be good. Basket swings are always a fantastic regulating activity for our children.
A play area for toddlers, because Ronaldshay park is mainly for bigger children. I don't like it for my toddler, so I have to drive out of town to find a nice toddler friendly park.
It's very damp and slippery 98% of the year because of its overhanging trees not allowing any natural light in so it never actually dries under foot. It could also do with maintenance cleaning at least once a year due to its location.
It would be lovely to make it inclusive for all children/families. Would be nice to see more sensory, natural options. We love wooden play areas. A tree house would be amazing. It doesn't get much sunlight and always seems damp/dirty.
A great little site with interesting natural features. Visited recently and thought the equipment wasn't in too bad a state, but the flooring round the balancing course was in very poor condition (damaged, sticking up), and made more dangerous by the ice. Also surprised not to see any 'No Dogs' signs, which is surely a basic requirement for a

playground. Look forward to seeing what improvements can be made. We visit Richmond 3-4 times a year from Northallerton with 2 children, 1 pre-school and 1 upper primary.
Just more inviting and more variety.
It definitely feels like a play area for older children at the moment it would be nice to have some baby swings in there for younger siblings
As a childminder and resident of Richmond I use to take the children to the falls play area when we had a walk along the batts. But the surface became quite slippery in places therefore quite dangerous for the early years children I care for. And the wooden steps became muddy and slippery. May be a better ground surface and more level if possible?
A splash park is really needed for the area and the space is perfect. Swings should be added and things for little ones
Pleased you're improving this. I would take my 2 year old and now new born more if it was improved.
The grass slopes are prone to getting muddy and slippery which is a safety problem, it would be good to see these have some form of grippy texture.
The flooring down at the park becomes very slippy when it rains down where the balance bench etc is. Could do with different flooring as I see a lot of children mine included run downhill from slide and fall over on the tarmac area. The flower speakers never work they could be removed. The steps downside of slide are all broken and dangerous for children. Could do with proper stairs been fitted (wider)
To add plenty of seating and picnic benches, a couple of dustbins at either end of the park is important too to reduce the amount of litter dropped. A freestanding slide- not one attached to or having to be used via a climbing frame. Plenty of swings- at least 4. Castle or Water/River theme and colours would complement the area really well. There is a piece of equipment at lady Serena's play park that the kids love, like a seesaw crossed with a bouncer and it also spins round.
It definitely needs updating my eldest used to play here all the time I now have a new baby who will be 1 come summer so more things could do with been added nice sitting area for parents swings for baby's zip line for older kids I have a teen ager too and she loves to climb and zip wire
The park is in a fantastic area, it needs to be made more inviting with more equipment. An extra slide, climbing areas, swings and a zip line would be good additions as well as plenty of seating to encourage people to stay longer.
The area looks neglected, my child finds the playground boring and often spends little time in it, the huge hill needs small tunnels digging in or hiding spots if it's going to stay otherwise it's just a big hazard. He enjoys the slide when he pretends it's something else. But the other equipment is pretty redundant. The plastic does not fit in with the beautiful surroundings for example the steppingstones/balance beams they would look far better if they were wooden. It would be useful to have more open ended play equipment such as tunnels, tyres, huts etc. and more natural materials themed around nature/water.
Love the idea of a themed play area, would work so well with a castle theme. It could be a great space to stay a while with some more equipment and more seating.
Please make a better skatepark not out metal concrete please
Better grip on the floor. The flooring is currently designed to be cushioned but is very slippery when wet
It gets very very muddy so better surfaces need to be used. The use of space isn't good. It is in a beautiful setting and could be a wonderful play space but at the moment it is sparse and uninviting. The slope from the area where the slide is down to the bottom section is also quite steep and becomes very slippy indeed.
We'd love to see a swing and a spruce up, maybe somewhere to sit
It would be lovely to go down for a walk at the falls then settle into the park with a picnic and spend more time in there with more equipment so the children can run free and have fun with climbing walls slides swings and anything else would be better than it is now
I like this play area it is different to the others in Richmond and the River is the main attraction. I live the way the park follows the natural hills with the slide.
Somewhere safe for new parents to take newborn babies, catering to all ages onwards
I'm not commenting on the play equipment, but on the general character of the location. The enclosed space is tucked away under the trees and generally dark and uninviting. Removing the wall and creating a green area outside of railings would help make a better area at the falls, more inviting and less car dominant. A vibrant, welcoming atmosphere would potentially help lower antisocial behaviour too.
Rubbish bins
Please keep the trees!!!! They provide much needed shade in the summer.
Plenty of benches for parents to sit, nothing with sheer drops. No zip lines that will break within 6 months. Boot scrub area on exit would be could.
Must be well maintained

Think about surfaces. It gets very wet and muddy quickly. Need something for youngest children as river and falls makes a great play area for older kids.
It's very dark, covered in leaves, damp feeling and not very inviting so when my children were younger avoided it as it wasn't very welcoming. If possible please clear it of foliage, keep it for young children, add seating for parents and make it more appealing. Thank you
I think it's a great space with huge potential. It would be lovely to make use of the existing landscape - hills etc - the slide there already makes use of this. I used to go there a lot with my children but not now as they are all grown up but we enjoyed our visits there. The zip wire was fun too. Maybe more seating for adults and possibly some other play equipment in the area behind the toilets as this is also a great space but unused - I know local volunteers have worked hard here but it seems to be rather redundant. If it had some gates on the space this may encourage either a space to include children or doggy play area. BUT the main site - the playpark - is a lovely space and I look forward to seeing it being renovated.
Remove the big rope swing thing at the top. Level off the ground more, the big slope is no use to anyone. The slide is good but very dirty. The steps up to the slide need completely ripping out and redoing.
Natural climbing materials and a zip wire please
Wooden castle with a slide, swing and climbing sections, water park with sprinklers (look at Clifton Park in Rotherham), sand pit area with pulley systems buckets on chains to transport sand down shoots (Wentworth gardens centre)
A covered picnic/seating area would be a great addition, as there is nowhere in Richmond to sit outside in wet weather.
Currently the ground is very slippery. The surface needs to be a bit rough for grip as the area is very shady and damp. Large climbing frames accessible by all ages are usually a winner for children i support. Small steps up for toddlers, ramps for wheelchair users and rope ladders for older kids. Different exits and levels too such as climbing platforms, rope bridges, slides, and fire poles.
We love to visit this play area but it is often very muddy so solving this would be a big help for usage.
The playpark on Allenby Estate and near French Rd on the Garrison are good examples, and the Shawl in Leyburn. I've often driven to to use as they are better than the ones in Richmond offering a range of equipment for different ages/abilities. The wide slide in the hill that ends at floor level is good near the falls, my daughter really enjoys it and spends ages on it as she gets more afraid of high slides with steps or drops at the end.
Park always slippery, this needs addressing. Slide is too shallow and no fun, would be better on the steeper bank nearer to the steps. Lower area would be better used with a large climbing frame, multi-purpose slide, twirling things, etc.
Sensory, edible plants that are low maintenance perhaps a local. planting group could provide and help tend too. Rosemary, lavender, bay.... Some suggestions are seating and eating areas for parents and families, sheltered areas, a mixture of slides for different ages. Floor trampoline, wheelchair access roundabout and some swings. Animal education themes, There are plenty of inspirational theme parks that have some great spaces that are small in size, that children are drawn to. Including an artificial grass hill that children can roll down seen at Stockeld Park, glitter footpaths for toddlers. If you stop and actually look at what's being used the most and by who, it's not hard to get ideas and see problem areas. i.e. steps too big for smaller children or too far for children to walk, so take shortcuts and damage verges etc. please see https://www.ted.com/talks/mara_mintzer_how_kids_can_help_design_cities?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare . Lighting and consideration for dogs and bikes traveling through the area would also be good. If this area suffers from damp conditions then, drainage and suitable access and ground surface that drains and easy to clean should also be considered.
We don't use it as often as we would like due to how slippery it can get.
Need sensory floor maps climbing walls supportive swings and sea saws plus benches seating areas bins and water features
It needs to have the best variety of equipment so lots of children can play there at only one time- a boat with attached climbing equipment, slide etc would be awesome as children would engage in role play as well. I have seen some lovely examples of fixed musical instruments at Wentworth House (nr Sheffield) and Sheffield City Centre that looked durable and were used well.
Very dark, damp, muddy area. Needs trees cutting back. The slide doesn't slide! Needs to be more accessible for wheelchairs and pushchairs, very hilly area.
Needs demolishing and redoing it's just a complete mess now was great when it first appeared
We currently rarely use the playground because it doesn't have many activities, but if the park were upgraded and more activities there we would spend lots more time there! Water themes make sense with the locality. I think the questionnaires should be dropped into primary schools so the children get chance to speak.
There are a limited amount of parks in the area that I can take my toddler and young child to due to climbing frames being too high, it would be great if a 'toddler frame' that has easy access (for example, steps instead of a rope ladder) could be included in the park upgrades.

Better access and drainage for the area, the floor is mostly slippy and requires a better all weather non slip material. Please look at Australian parks or New Zealand parks as they are leading the way for childrens parks and cover all disabilities so there is something for everyone. Benches rather than picnic tables as we have seen what happens in the area with picnic tables (fires). If it were to be a theme for the park maybe a miniature Richmond castle / medieval theme.
Have a look at the park on French Road on the Garrison. It's so great for toddlers who aren't climbing but have independence to walk and run and slide.
Make it vandal proof as much as possible, but most of all, ask the kids, not the adults!
A bridge across the two hills with a red castle one side and a blue castle the other side. Both with their own slide down each hill.
I think the location of the play area is wrong. It's always slippery due to lack of sunlight. I think the location of the park should be down at the station and swimming baths on the grass area
It would be lovely to see a nature themed park. Mud kitchens, small picnic tables that are accessible to all ages, this gives the younger and older children the ability to interact together too.
The parking costs are also off putting for the children's play area in its current state as there is not a lot in the park, I would hope parking prices would be considered alongside improvements to the park so that parents can perhaps stay a decent part of the day without parking fees
The play area needs regular maintenance as it gets very slippy due to the surrounding trees. This maintenance has not been regular enough in the past.
Please clean it up as there's some sort of building at the top of the current slide Could we make use of that?
Please also address the drainage issues. It's a beautiful spot and it would be so nice to have a beautiful wood based play park. The adventure play park at Hopetown in Darlington is an attraction in itself and well worth £5 for my child. Although a much smaller space, it would be a good model to use as a basic idea, IMO
Trees need to be cut back to increase light into play area. Surfaces should be anti-slip. Area will need to be cleaned several times a year to prevent everything becoming green- it's a damp area. Once things become neglected, nobody wants to use them.
Situated in a steep sided valley it suffers badly from a lack of sunlight and always looks dull and uninviting. I have discussed this with others and unprompted everyone arrives at the same conclusion, all or some of the trees must go otherwise any improvements will quickly become covered in mold and grime. Undoubtedly any suggestion to remove any trees will be met with screams of derision from certain elements but the majority of the population would support it. Done selectively it could open up the view to the river, increase sunlight and reduce leaf debris. The trunks could be left in place and converted into sculptures.
Wooden play areas are often better as metal is hard and cold, especially in a shaded zone.
Also some outdoor gym equipment
Cut back the tree, Improving access so it isn't as slippy. There isn't a zipline within 30 miles of Richmond.
Floor can be slippy. Benches are unhygienic maybe use wooden ones?
Try to make the park less dangerous, as the floor covering is extremely slippy and the slope is also too steep for people in wheelchairs and mobility scooters. My husband actually toppled over in his mobility scooter while trying to get up the slope. He was injured and had to attend A&E!!
I think it is a waste of money, it is poorly placed for locals. Will be trashed by visiting teenagers sucking gas in the summer. Yet the playpark in Marne Grange Colburn, floods, isn't completed after being built 6 years ago. Local kids want to use it but cant as it is such a disgrace and was never officially signed off as completed when the estate was finished. Money would be better spent in housing estates in areas of need instead of for tourists.
I do think it would be nice to incorporate Richmond Myths and legends like the drummer boy and Willances leap. Could you also include local artists - Chris Layfield with his doodle art? Just a thought...
Trim some trees for light to help with the damp. Create somewhere for the older kids to play, invest in them and they may trash the rest of the town.
Perhaps incorporate a slide and/or activity tunnel into the hill.
My grandchildren enjoy parks with zip swings
Cycle park, scooter element Or wet park for summer or area for that. The parks around cater for 0 to 5 really nothing or 6 to 15 which age range of my kids
Be nice for the play area to be natural looking more like a woodland play area that's more aesthetically pleasing. Towers with walkways, bridges and climbing walls that encourage children's imaginative play.
A complex wooden structure would be able to provide interest and excitement for a wide age range and be in keeping with the location. Hopetown in Darlington has some excellent ideas.
Ground becomes extremely slippy when wet