



**Great Park**  
Neighbourhood Association

# SEND AND ACCESS GROUP

Play Park Accessibility Survey Summer 2024

AUGUST 1, 2024  
GPNA  
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## **Executive Summary**

After meeting with residents and other members of the committee as part of my role in the GPNA, a need to improve accessibility around Great Park was identified as an issue. The parents and carers living in Great Park also expressed their frustrations by a lack of diverse play equipment on the play parks within the estate. From this, alongside Sue Wannop and Alison Macleod's guidance, I created a survey for members to complete to identify what improvements could be made.

The key findings were that most parks are inaccessible for those with accessibility needs due to unfinished pavements leading to the parks themselves and the surface within most parks is bark, which is very difficult for those in wheelchairs or with walking frames to navigate. Another key finding was the lack of inclusive equipment for children and the adults who supervise them.

Our main recommendations from this report is to ensure pathways, especially those which lead to the play parks within Great Park are completed immediately. The surface of the current play parks needs to be improved by putting paths within the parks, to allow access for those with additional needs. Once those with access needs can enter the park; there needs to be much more inclusive equipment. Suggestions include (but not limited to); wheelchair friendly roundabout, accessible seesaw, accessible swings, accessible picnic benches, rocking and spinning toys for sensory needs, 2 seater swings so adults can support their child, football posts, basketball hoops, splash pads, interactive wall and a jungle gym.

## **Introduction**

Great Park is an ever expanding estate, with 6 play parks within it. The objective of the survey was to find out from the residents whether the parks are suitable for everyone who chooses to live here. We initially started with a group of 7 volunteer residents who completed surveys for us, however to gain a true picture and a greater sample, we opened this up to anyone who lived in Great Park.

## **Methodology**

The survey was in an online format. Originally the questions were developed between Sue and I, however Allison Macleod guided us to ensure the questions were appropriate. From this, I updated the survey questions, created a link then shared it with the 7 volunteers. Sue shared the survey with head teachers and other contacts through a community event. However, we had a limited number of results, so the GPNA decided to share this on our Facebook page. By doing this, the sample increased to 132 respondents. The residents who responded had children with SEND or access needs, or used the parks on a regular basis.

## **Survey Results**

For ease of analysis, I have broken the survey down into each individual park on Great Park; with key or reoccurring comments of each.

### *Community Centre Play Park*

<b><u>Question</u></b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Is there suitable parking?	42%	58%
Is the surface at the entrance accessible?	46%	54%
Is there a designated disabled parking bay?	19%	81%
Are the paths suitable for everyone to use?	60%	40%
Are the gates wide enough?	92%	8%
Is the lock on the gate suitable?	19%	81%
<b><u>Question</u></b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Is the fencing high enough?	96%	4%
Is the surface in the park suitable for everyone?	6%	84%
Are there pathways inside the park to access each piece of equipment?	19%	81%
Is the equipment accessible for everyone?	11%	89%
Is there seating in the park?	96%	4%
Is there a picnic bench that everyone can use?	4%	96%

### *Summary of Comments Received*

Most stated a different surface should be used, one that is suitable for wheelchairs.

Many stated the grates weren't suitable and a gate was needed.

Many suggested that paths didn't have a top layer and were tricky for access. Self-propelled wheelchair and struggles to use unfinished paths to access park in the first place.

Some stated the equipment wasn't great for all children to play on - wooden frames more suited for older children only.

More swings, better maintenance, an accessible roundabout, just more equipment in general.

Elmwood Play Park

<u>Question</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Is the fencing high enough?	33%	67%
Is the surface in the park suitable for everyone?	41%	59%
Are there pathways inside the park to access each piece of equipment?	19%	81%
Is the equipment accessible for everyone?	28%	72%
Is there seating in the park?	97%	3%
Is there a picnic bench that everyone can use?	0%	100%
<u>Question</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Is there suitable parking?	69%	31%
Is the surface at the entrance accessible?	65%	35%
Is there a designated disabled parking bay?	6%	93%
Are the paths suitable for everyone to use?	86%	14%
Are the gates wide enough?	76%	24%
Is the lock on the gate suitable?	17%	83%

### *Summary of Comments Received*

Better surface to make accessible for all, a gate or fence is needed as dogs run in and children can escape, paths to access each piece of equipment, areas flood around equipment and consortium do not address this. Sloped path is difficult for a manual wheelchair user.

A swing and a slide suitable for disabled children, wider range of play equipment suited for toddlers and younger children, sandpit. hide and seek areas, accessible seesaw, monkey bars.

Most respondents stated that this park was built to look aesthetically pleasing but does not actually take into account what children want to play with.

Accessible picnic benches were stated as an improvement by many respondents.

*Greenside Play Park*

<b><u>Question</u></b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Is the fencing high enough?	85%	15%
Is the surface in the park suitable for everyone?	43%	57%
Are there pathways inside the park to access each piece of equipment?	20%	80%
Is the equipment accessible for everyone?	14%	86%
Is there seating in the park?	90%	10%
Is there a picnic bench that everyone can use?	14%	86%
<b><u>Question</u></b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Is there suitable parking?	43%	57%
Is the surface at the entrance accessible?	81%	19%
Is there a designated disabled parking bay?	0%	100%
Are the paths suitable for everyone to use?	80%	20%
Are the gates wide enough?	81%	19%
Is the lock on the gate suitable?	30%	70%

### *Summary of Comments Received*

Gates don't have a latch or lock -safety concerns, the surface within the park is unsuitable as they are woodchip. The wood chips were stated to be a poor choice as it is often waterlogged and prevents access to equipment.

Equipment wise responders asked for swings, seesaw, rocking toys (sensory), zip lines - most responses stated that their children felt this park was boring as not all children like to climb or are able to climb.

Of those surveyed most asked for benches and wheelchair accessible tables to be added to the park as the seating is limited.

Lynemouth Play Park

<b><u>Question</u></b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Is the fencing high enough?	17%	83%
Is the surface in the park suitable for everyone?	32%	68%
Are there pathways inside the park to access each piece of equipment?	21%	79%
Is the equipment accessible for everyone?	38%	62%
Is there seating in the park?	97%	3%
Is there a picnic bench that everyone can use?	77%	23%
<b><u>Question</u></b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Is there suitable parking?	31%	69%
Is the surface at the entrance accessible?	34%	66%
Is there a designated disabled parking bay?	3%	97%
Are the paths suitable for everyone to use?	57%	43%
Are the gates wide enough?	72%	28%
Is the lock on the gate suitable?	25%	75%

### *Summary of Comments Received*

Fencing and gates around the park was mentioned by most responders. Many also stated the ground was boggy and muddy so prevented access. Again, wood chips are used so this is not accessible for wheelchairs or pushchairs. Paths which are completed/topped off to ensure wheelchair access is good. Paths within the park to allow each piece of equipment to be accessed. Better drainage was mentioned by some too.

In terms of equipment the survey stated; more baby swings, more accessible swings, 2 seater swing so an adult could support their child, things for older children e.g. basketball hoop, football posts. However, this park on a whole had the most positive response in terms of equipment. Another response stated that the orange dish swing has been taken down and this was one piece of inclusive equipment.

Melbury Play Park

<b><u>Question</u></b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Is the fencing high enough?	100%	0%
Is the surface in the park suitable for everyone?	38%	63%
Are there pathways inside the park to access each piece of equipment?	94%	6%
Is the equipment accessible for everyone?	20%	80%
Is there seating in the park?	94%	6%
Is there a picnic bench that everyone can use?	0%	100%
<b><u>Question</u></b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Is there suitable parking?	44%	56%
Is the surface at the entrance accessible?	94%	6%
Is there a designated disabled parking bay?	0%	100%
Are the paths suitable for everyone to use?	94%	6%
Are the gates wide enough?	88%	12%
Is the lock on the gate suitable?	25%	75%

### *Summary of Comments Received*

Although this park is the only one to have rubber flooring - it has not been maintained and there are many holes and it is loose in places. Most of the equipment is broken and not maintained so needs repairing or replacing.

Better equipment and more is needed to improve access for all and for younger children (under 5). Suggestions included a roundabout, toddler climbing frame, tunnels, built in trampolines, disabled friendly swings, splash pad, interactive wall, jungle gym.

Responders asked for wheelchair friendly picnic benches, seating areas outside of the park itself or just more seating. Many want the stairs to the slide to be repaired.

Warkworth Woods Play Park (Please note, only 2 responses for this park)

<b><u>Question</u></b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Is the fencing high enough?	100%	0%
Is the surface in the park suitable for everyone?	50%	50%
Are there pathways inside the park to access each piece of equipment?	100%	0%
Is the equipment accessible for everyone?	50%	50%
Is there seating in the park?	100%	0%
Is there a picnic bench that everyone can use?	0%	100%
<b><u>Question</u></b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Is there suitable parking?	0%	100%
Is the surface at the entrance accessible?	50%	50%
Is there a designated disabled parking bay?	0%	100%
Are the paths suitable for everyone to use?	50%	50%
Are the gates wide enough?	50%	50%
Is the lock on the gate suitable?	0%	100%

### *Summary of Comments Received*

Although this park seems more accessible by having pathways within the park, the whole park is deemed to look tired and both respondents stated that it needed updating.

Again bark below equipment was brought up as an accessibility issue. A response was even one piece of equipment that was suitable for all to use would make a difference.

## **Recommendations**

As highlighted numerous times, across multiple parks, the first issue to address is the surfaces. This includes the surfaces leading to the parks themselves by ensuring paths are finished and to a high quality. Also another huge priority would be the surfaces within the play parks; either resurface the whole park with a suitable alternative to bark or cement pathways provided within the park, to access each piece of equipment within it. This needs to be completed to meet the Equality Act 2010, particularly Section 20: Duty to make adjustments. Service providers, in this case, the developers are required to make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people. Physical changes to premises where necessary.

Once the surfaces are adequate enough to ensure a disabled person is not at a substantial disadvantage, we can then look at accessible equipment. This is covered in Section 29 of the Equality Act, which stipulates that service providers must not discriminate against disabled persons when providing services or facilities. Therefore, future planning of play parks must include equipment that is accessible to all before it is approved. The access group and residents would be able to offer support with the decision making process with this. To solve the current issue of failing to address the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) of eliminating discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. We need to include some accessible play equipment in the play parks within Great Park.

After speaking to families and residents, most agreed that the most accessible and suitable park to spend S106 money would be the park by the Community Centre. We propose something such as those linked below for use of the S106 money remaining as mentioned by James Cowen in our initial meeting:

Inclusive Roundabout - £6,889

<https://www.playdale.co.uk/product/inclusive-orbit/>

<https://www.actionplayandleisure.co.uk/playground-equipment/wheelchair-roundabout/>

Wheelchair Inclusive Swing – POA

<https://www.actionplayandleisure.co.uk/playground-equipment/wheelchair-swing-12/>

Wheelchair inclusive picnic table £575

<https://www.actionplayandleisure.co.uk/playground-equipment/wheelchair-accessible-picnic-table/>

(It is important to note, that the gap in this picnic bench is in the middle, feedback suggests those in wheelchairs feel more included here, rather than being put at the other end of the table)

Inclusive Swings – prices vary from £3374

<https://www.actionplayandleisure.co.uk/playground-equipment/cradle-flat-nest-swing/>

This is included as it also has a swing for younger children, which was another issue brought up in our survey.

<https://www.actionplayandleisure.co.uk/playground-equipment/double-nest-swing/>

Future planning

<https://www.actionplayandleisure.co.uk/playground-equipment/foxley-4-inclusive-play-tower/>

This level of accessibility would be the ultimate goal.

## **Conclusion**

To reiterate, the main outcomes from the responses to the survey are to ensure paths externally to the play parks are accessible and the surface within them is accessible too. Then equipment needs to be purchased to ensure inclusivity to enable Great Park to meet the expectations of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 – Survey Questions**

Name .....

Contact Details .....

Play Park Assessed.....

Is there suitable parking near the play park?  
Is there a designated disabled parking bay?  
Are the paths suitable for everyone to visit the play park?  
What improvements could be made?

Is the surface at the entrance to the play park accessible for everyone?  
Are the gates wide enough to get into the play park?  
Is the lock on the gate suitable?  
Is the fencing high enough?  
Is the surface in the play park suitable for everyone?  
Are there pathways inside the play park to access each piece of equipment?  
What improvements could be made?

Is the play equipment accessible for everyone?  
What play equipment would make an improvement to the play park?  
Is there seating in the play park?  
Is there a picnic bench that everyone can use?  
What improvements could be made?

Any other ideas for improving the play parks?

### **Appendix 2 – Raw Data (Anonymised)**

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GyPMjkb4WB8Y9SsL5aowQHvBFDAQScMkj3zt6rzuOZw/edit?usp=sharing>

## **References**

Section 20: Duty to make adjustments

Equality Act 2010, c. 15. (2010). Duty to make adjustments. S. 20. Available at:  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/20> [Accessed 1 August 2024]

Section 29: Provision of services, etc.

Equality Act 2010, c. 15. (2010). Provision of services, etc. S. 29. Available at:  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/29> [Accessed 1 August 2024]

Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149)

Equality Act 2010, c. 15. (2010). Public sector equality duty. S. 149. Available at:  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149> [Accessed 1 August 2024]

