

59818 Inclusive Play Area Design Standards

The current, formal internal definition, design standard, or extract from an official policy document (such as a play strategy) that sets out the requirements for an 'inclusive play area' or 'accessible playground'.

This request is restricted to one single definition or set of design criteria found in a document that was in force on or after 1st January 2024.

If the definition is contained within a larger document, please provide only the relevant section or link with a page number reference.

At present, the Council does not operate with a single, formally adopted definition or standalone internal design standard specifically for inclusive or accessible playparks. However, inclusion and accessibility are key considerations within our design process for all new and refurbished play areas.

Community consultation forms an important part of project development. Feedback from residents, including families and carers, is considered alongside site constraints and available budget. Inclusive and accessible equipment is incorporated wherever practicable and where it aligns with both consultation outcomes and project funding. In addition, accessible safety surfacing is provided as standard within all new or refurbished designs to support safer and more inclusive access across the site.

In assessing the quality of play provision, the Council has historically applied play value scoring based on the National Playing Fields Association PlaySafe 2000 system, as referenced in the Play Action Plan 2011–2016. Play value scores are derived by assessing the quality and variety of play opportunities available for children and young people across different age groups (0–6, 6–8, and 8–14), together with site factors.

Points are awarded where play areas provide a range of opportunities, including for example:

- Balancing
- Climbing
- Crawling
- Sliding (including alternative sliding experiences)
- Rocking
- Rotating (single, twin and multi-user)
- Group and single swinging
- Sand and water play
- Ball play areas
- Problem-solving and games
- Ground graphics
- Sounding items

- Viewing platforms
- Social play spaces
- Wheel play areas
- Provision for children and young people with additional support needs

This approach focuses on the breadth and quality of play experiences available rather than solely on the quantity of equipment.

The Council is currently developing a new Open Space Strategy. As part of this work, all playparks are being assessed against both the historic play value scoring methodology outlined above and an enhanced assessment framework. The enhanced system will consider elements of inclusion and accessibility, both within the play area itself and in relation to the wider park setting (such as paths, entrances and supporting infrastructure).

This work is ongoing and details have not yet been formally published. However, it will inform the development of a new Play Strategy and Action Plan going forward.