

Play Area Improvement Survey – Hartwith Drive, Harrogate

North Yorkshire Council is working to improve the quality of the Hartwith Drive play area in Harrogate. This survey aimed to gather opinions from local residents and park users to help us decide on some new equipment for the play area.

The money (£19,018.39) for this project would come from the S106 money (Commutated Sums) and Capital funding from the former Harrogate district. Commuted Sums is money paid to North Yorkshire Council by property developers when providing residential properties within the council area.

The online survey was open from Thursday 21 May 2026 until Thursday 2 July 2026, available on North Yorkshire Council's consultations web page. Posters were put up locally and paper copies were available at the local library.

Headline Results

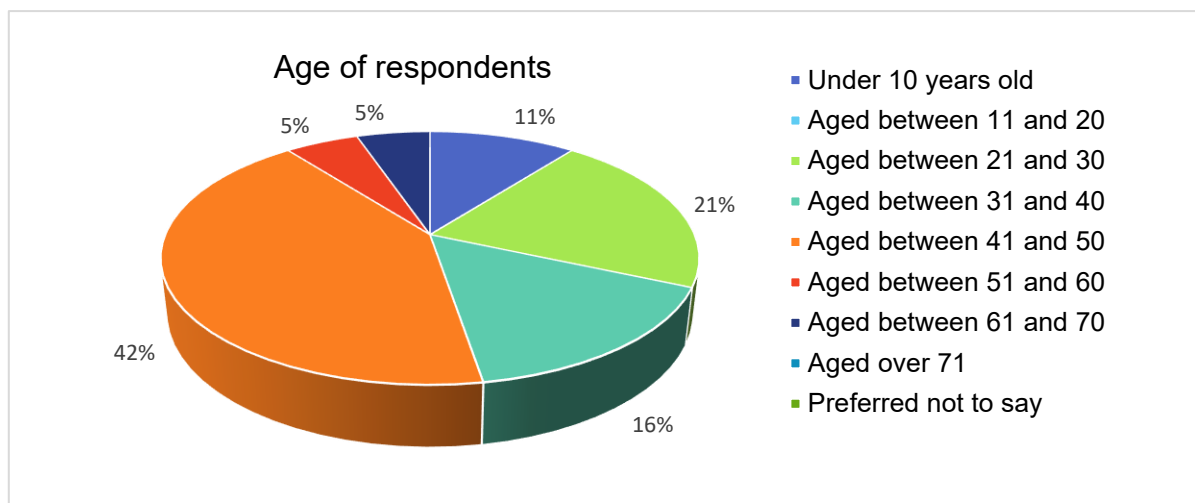
- 19 respondents took part in the survey.
- Swinging and climbing were the most popular play activities.
- The majority of respondents were female.
- The largest age group was 41 to 50 years old.
- Most respondents spent less than one hour at the play area.
- Climbing frames or climbing walls were the most popular type of play equipment.
- Slides and swings were also highly valued.

The feedback highlighted a number of recurring themes that could help shape future improvements. Several respondents felt that additional equipment was needed for both toddlers and older children, including smaller slides, age-appropriate climbing structures, obstacle courses and in-ground trampolines. Accessibility was also identified as a priority, with requests for a disability swing and smooth, level paths suitable for wheelchairs and prams. Concerns were raised about the height and safety of some existing equipment, particularly the larger climbing frames and slides.

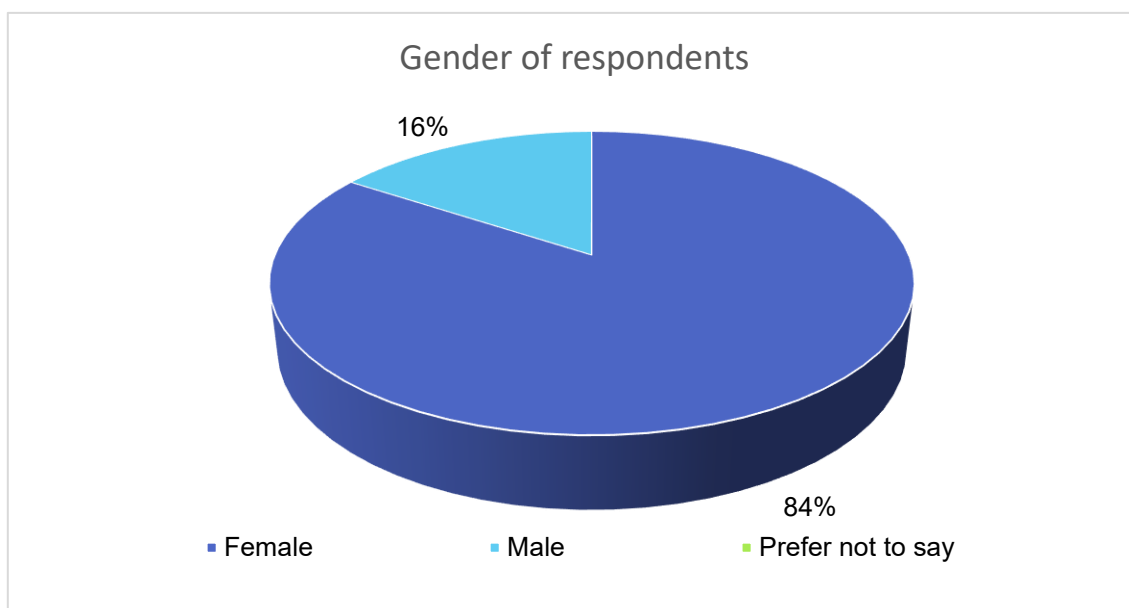
Other comments focused on maintenance and management issues, including litter, a lack of seating and bins, outdated equipment, and concerns about antisocial behaviour from older children and teenagers. Despite these concerns, there was generally positive feedback about the play area, with respondents recognising its existing strengths and expressing support for expanding the range of play opportunities available.

About the respondents

There were 19 respondents in total. The largest age group was 41 to 50 years old, with 8 respondents (42%). 21 to 30 year olds accounted for 4 respondents (21%). 31 to 40 year olds accounted for 3 respondents (16%). Children aged 0 to 10 represented 2 respondents (11%). 1 respondent (5%) aged 51 to 60, and 1 respondent (5%) aged 61 to 70

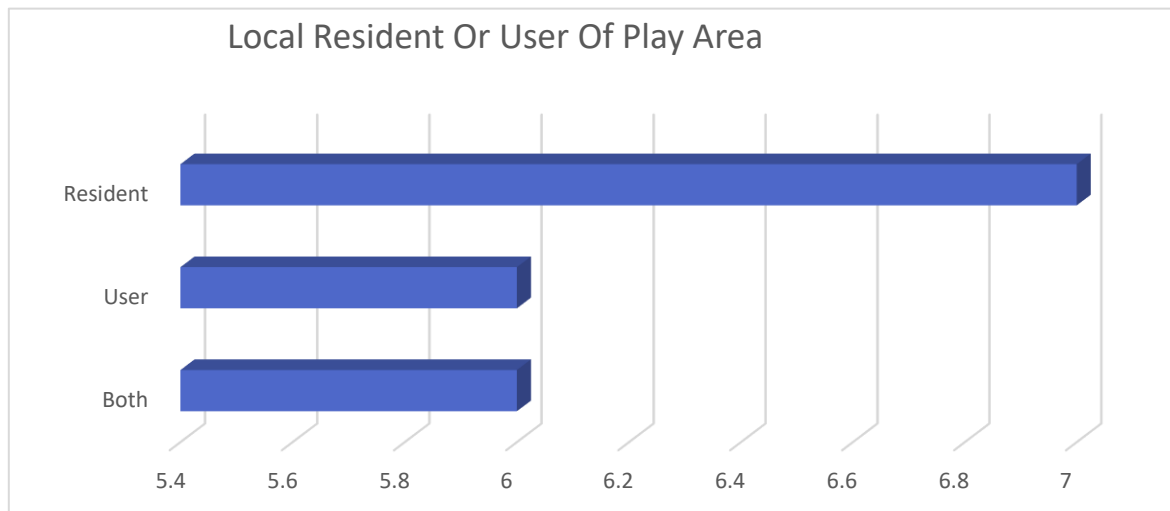


The majority of respondents were female (16 respondents, 84%), with 3 male respondents (16%) and no respondents who preferred not to say.



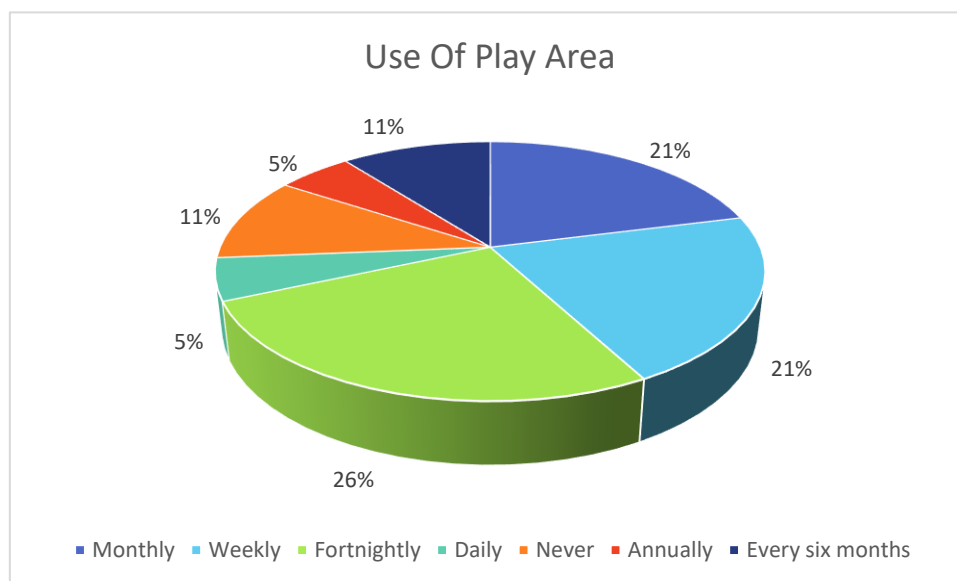
Are you a local resident or user of this play area?

Of the 36 respondents who answered this question, resident is the most common category with 7 responses (37%). User and Both are tied, each with 6 responses (31.5%).



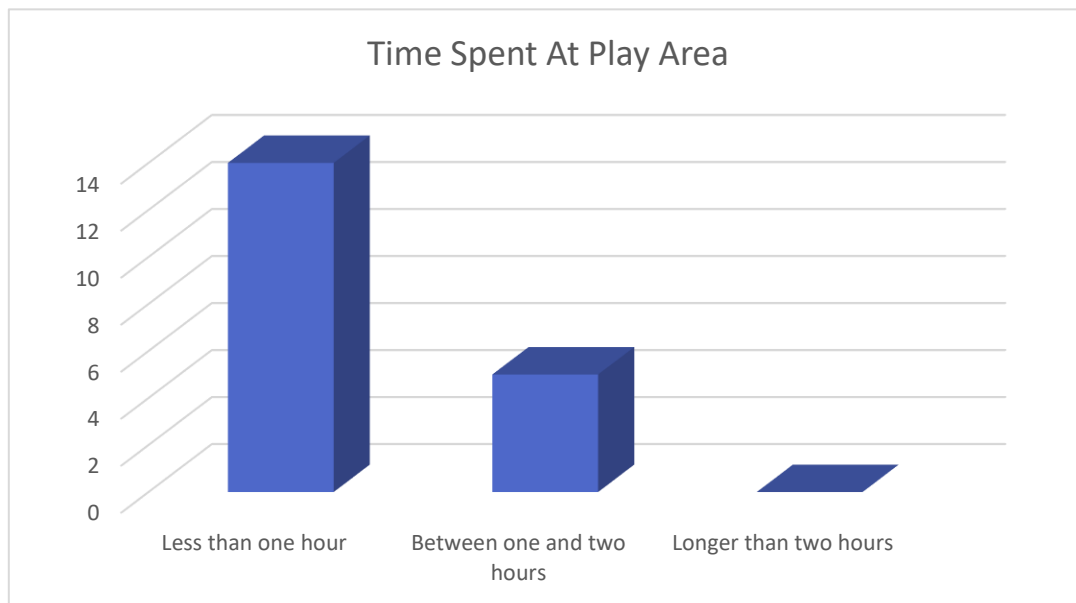
How often do you use the play area?

There were 36 respondents in total. Fortnightly is the most common response, accounting for 26% (5) of all responses. Weekly and Monthly are tied as the second most common frequencies at 21% (4) each. 11% of respondents selected Never as well as every six months at 11% (2). Annually and daily make up 5% (1) each.



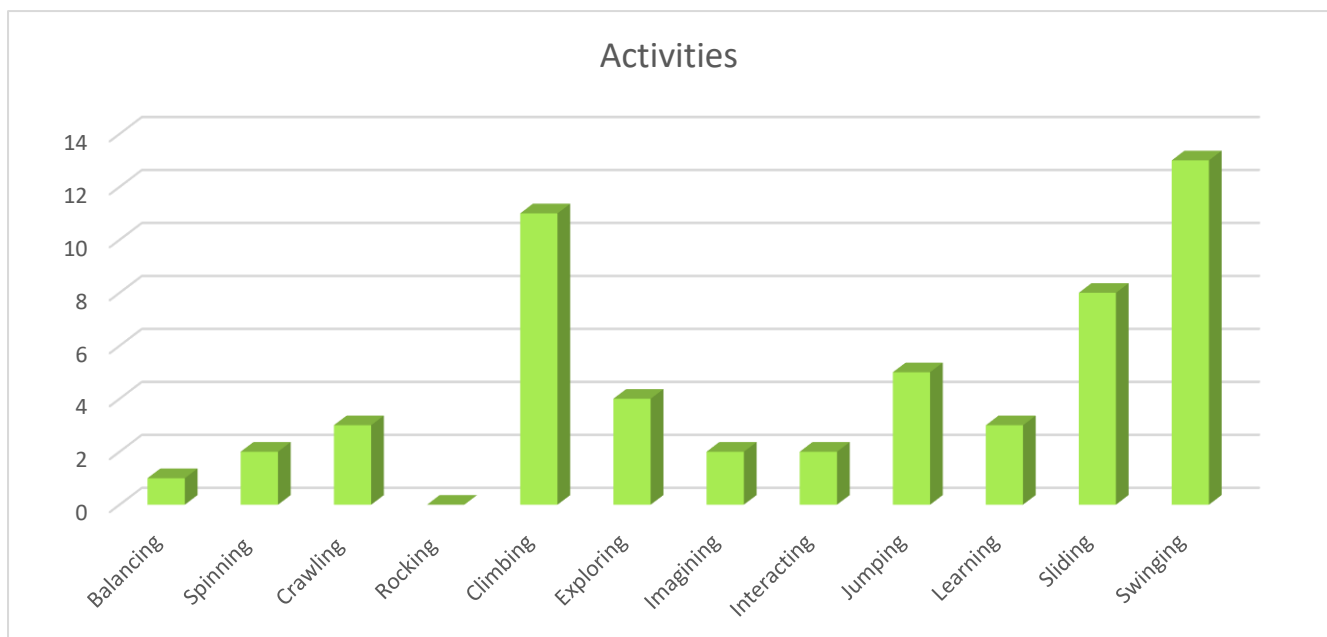
How long do you spend in the play area?

The majority of respondents 14 (74%) spend less than one hour on the activity. 5 respondents (26%) spend between one and two hours. No respondents reported spending more than two hours.



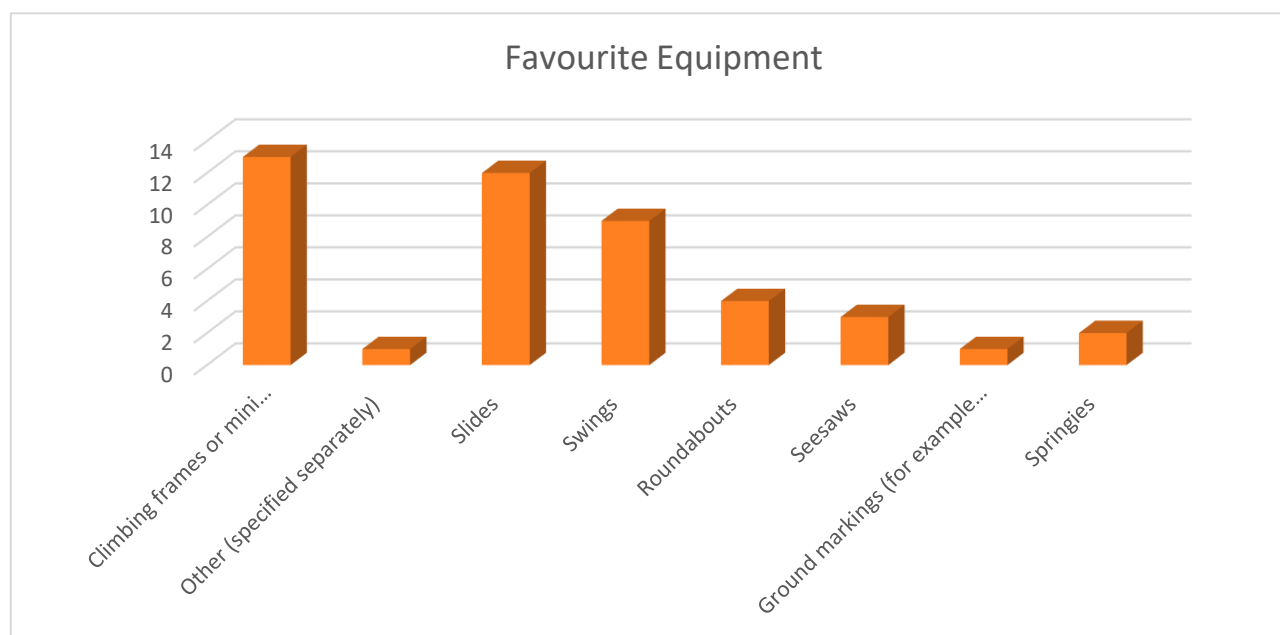
What activities do you like best?

Swinging 13 (68%), Climbing 11 (58%), Sliding 8 (42%), Jumping 5 (26%), Exploring 4 (21%), Crawling 3 (16%), Learning 3 (16%), Interacting 2 (11%), Imagining 2 (11%), Spinning 2 (11%), Balancing 1 (5%)



What play equipment do you like best?

Climbing frames or mini climbing walls or boulders 13 (72%), Slides 1 (67%), Swings 9 (50%), Roundabouts 4 (22%), Seesaws 3 (17%), Springies 2 (11%), Ground markings (e.g. trails and games) 1 (6%), Other 1 (6%)



Other suggestions were...

Smaller equipment for toddlers, tunnels to run through, small frames, activity panels, musical spinners etc

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

Could do with some things for toddlers to use like things connected to the fences like boards or something. And a smaller slide for toddlers as this one here is dangerous it's very tall. The springy rocking horse and train are very old too they could do with replacing with something new.

Why were only certain play areas chosen? Are these ones for the chop?

Bins More benches More equipment

A disability swing is definitely needed and a safe flat path for wheelchair and prams

I am a childminder in the area and I find some of the play frames too high with large drops, This can be tricky when trying to care for multiple children on the frame. I also find the large, tall slides dangerous because the children's shoes stick to the slide and they end up falling forward

A toddler and older children climbing frames. In floor trampolines

Is there a way to keep teenagers out? They swear, litter, break things, etc. Perhaps the play area should be monitored by CCTV.

The area isn't really kept tidy. It's on a slope and not much for little ones to develop their physical skills. Unfortunately, don't use it much as it gets big groups of bigger kids who are rude, swear and try and destroy the equipment.

More for older children aged 7-12. Bigger climbing frames, obstacles courses- balancing and tunnels for example. I went to the park at Hawes, and it had lots of different things for me, my older brother and my cousin who is one. We all had a good time. Albie aged 8

This park is brilliant anyway for the kids but extending across would allow room for even more activities such as climbing frames as the park has lots of things to do already. If we weren't so far we would come to this one a lot more.

More parks should include equipment for children with physical disabilities, such as a wheelchair-accessible swing. Every child deserves the opportunity to play alongside their peers, and inclusive equipment would make a significant difference to families who currently have limited access to suitable play opportunities.

Simple, engaging information boards placed around the park could help parents understand how everyday play supports their child's development while providing ideas to encourage interaction and conversation. For example:

- 5 things you can see (visual)
- 4 things you can touch (tactile)
- 3 things you can hear (auditory)
- 2 emotions you feel while at the park (interoception and emotional awareness)
- 1 movement you enjoyed today (vestibular)

The design of the equipment, choice of materials and impact-absorbing surfaces all play an important role in helping children to take appropriate risks safely. Children learn through appropriately managed risk, and well-designed play environments encourage them to develop balance, coordination, strength, resilience, confidence and problem-solving skills while giving parents reassurance that they can explore within an environment that has been thoughtfully designed with safety in mind.