

Play Area Improvement Survey – Panhandle, Harrogate

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

The money (£8,131.12) 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

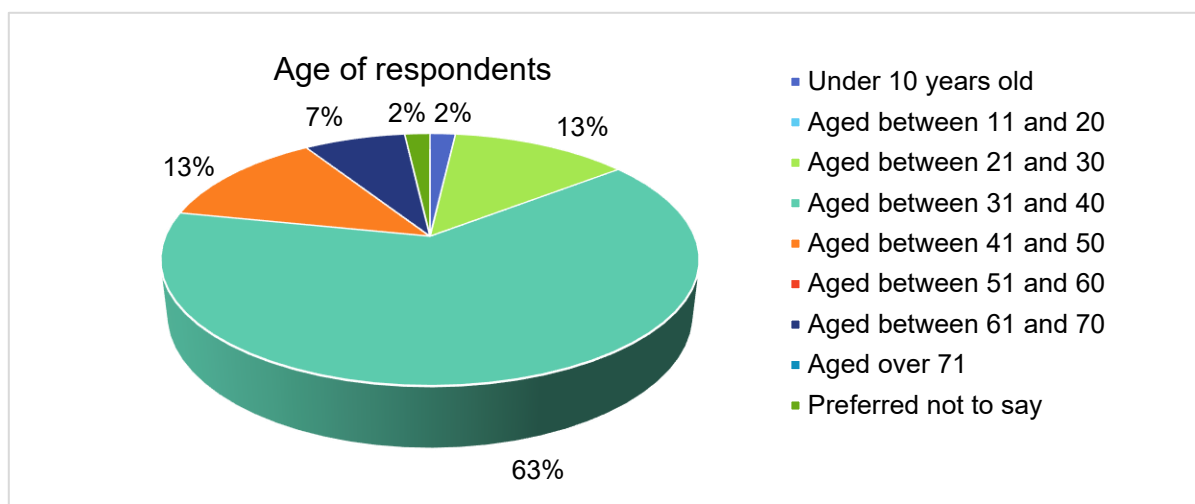
- 55 respondents in total.
- The majority of respondents were female, with the majority aged 31 to 40 years.
- 57% of respondents identified as both residents and users of the play area.
- The play area is used regularly, with 65% of respondents visiting weekly.
- Swinging, climbing and sliding were the most popular play activities.
- The most popular items of play equipment were swings, slides and climbing frames, mini climbing walls or boulders.

The survey demonstrates that the play area is a well-used and highly valued community facility with significant potential. Respondents strongly support investment in the site and would like to see a comprehensive upgrade that includes modern play equipment, improved maintenance, enhanced accessibility and facilities that cater for children and young people of all ages. A significant number of respondents highlighted the need for more inclusive and accessible play opportunities.

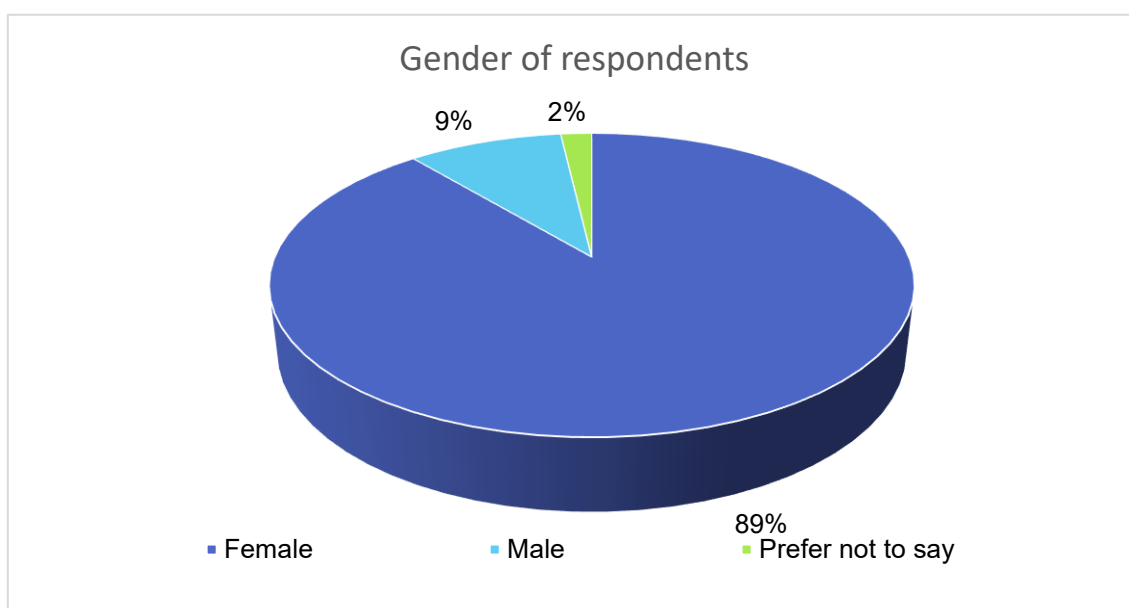
There was also interest in nature-based features such as planting areas, wood carvings and play opportunities integrated into the wider landscape. Respondents showed a clear preference for active and physically engaging play opportunities as swinging, climbing and sliding being the most popular play activities.

About the respondents

There were 55 respondents in total. The largest age group was 31 to 40 years old, accounting for 35 respondents, followed by those aged 21 to 30 years old with 7 respondents, and 41 to 50 years old with 7 respondents. A further 4 respondents were aged 61 to 70 years old, while 1 respondent was aged 0 to 10. 1 respondent preferred not to state their age.

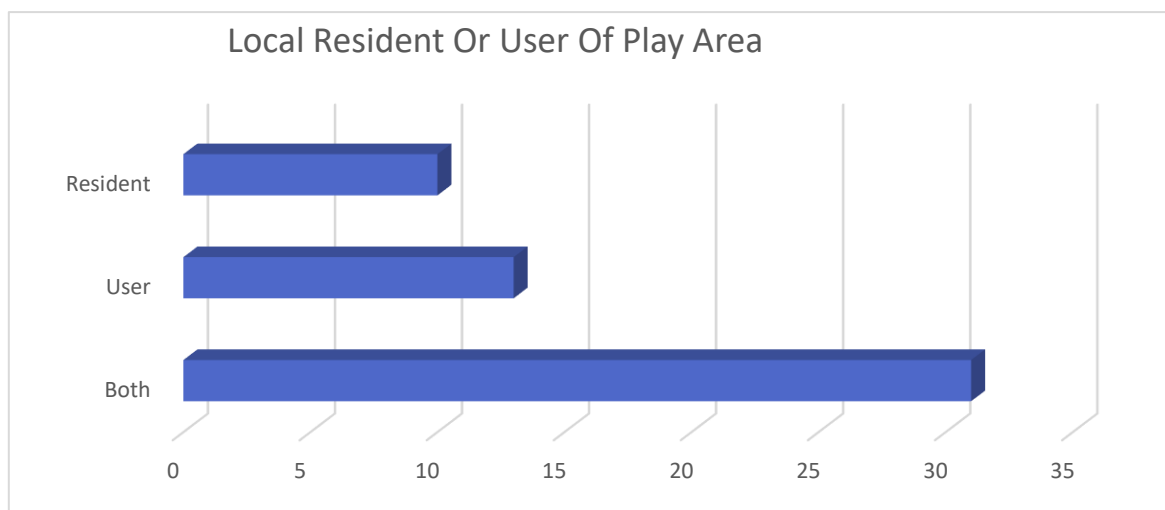


The majority of respondents were female (48 respondents, 89%), with 5 male respondents (9%) and 1 respondent (2%) who preferred not to say.



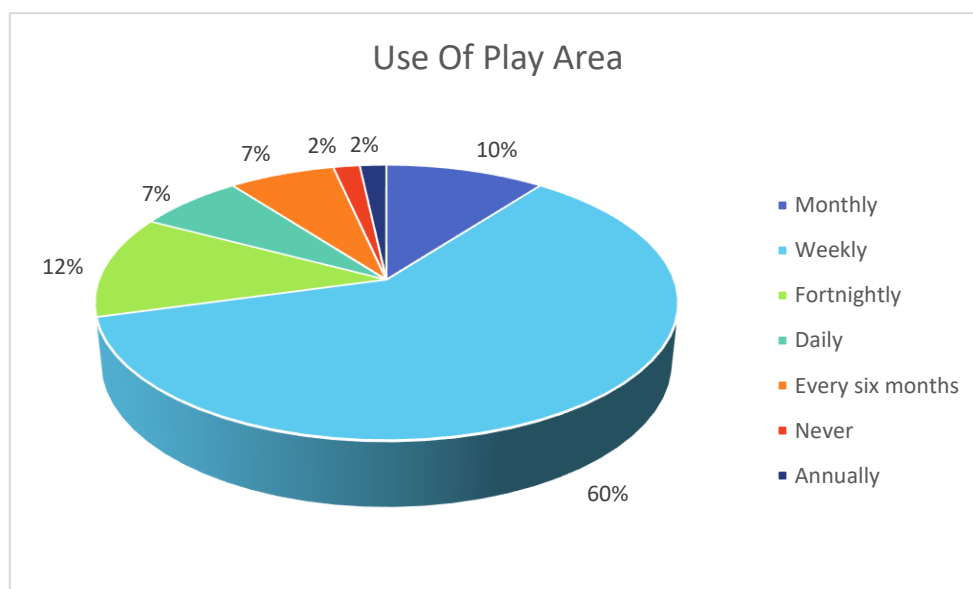
Are you a local resident or user of this play area?

Of the 54 respondents who answered this question, the majority of respondents (31 people, 57%) identified as Both, meaning they are both a resident and a user of the play area. 13 respondents (24%) identified as Users only. 10 respondents (19%) identified as Residents only.



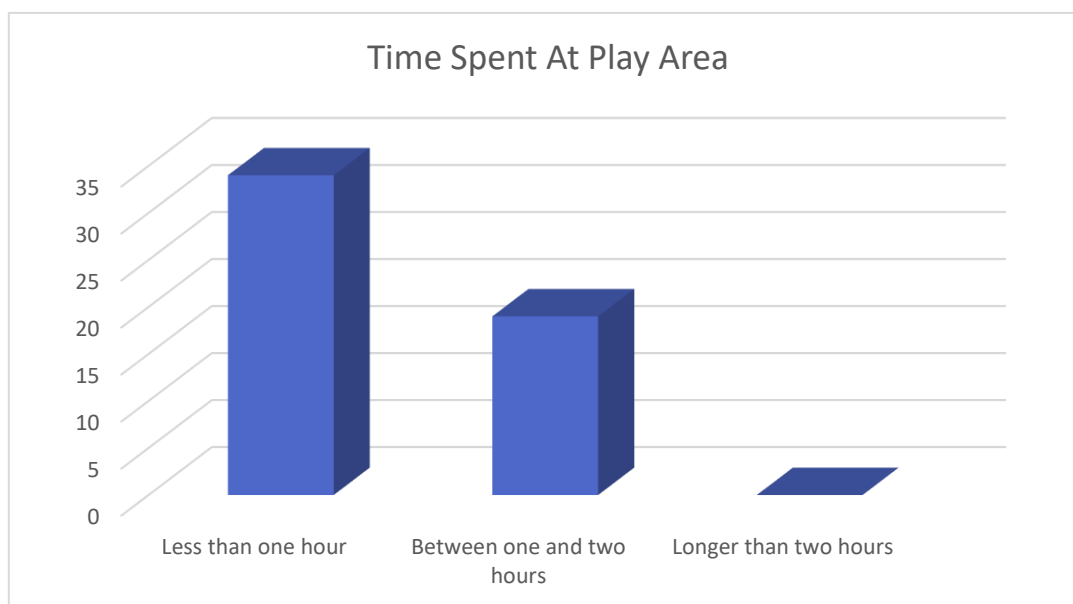
How often do you use the play area?

There were 54 respondents in total. 35 (60%) of respondents use the play area on a weekly basis. A further 7 (12%) use the play area fortnightly and 6 (10%) monthly. Daily users represent 4 (7%) of respondents as well as every six months also at 4 (7%), while only a small amount of 1 (2%) each reported using the play area annually, or not at all.



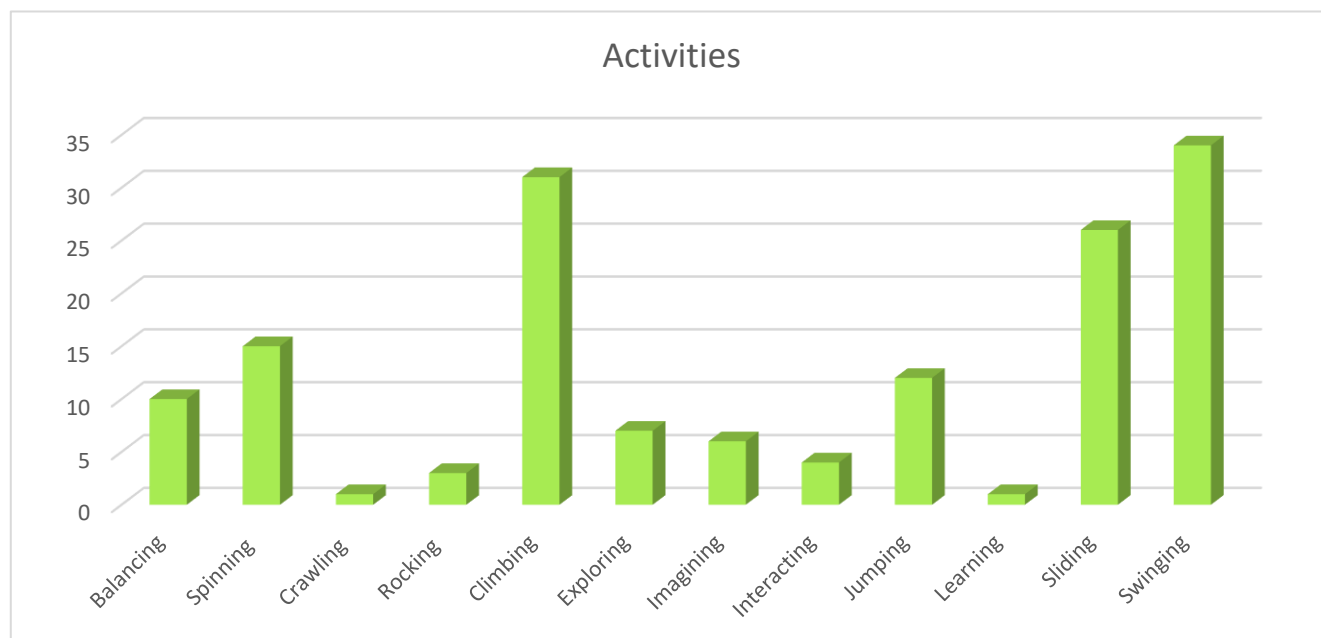
How long do you spend in the play area?

The majority of respondents 64% (34) spend less than one hour at the play area. 36% (19) of respondents spend between one and two hours. No respondents reported spending more than two hours.



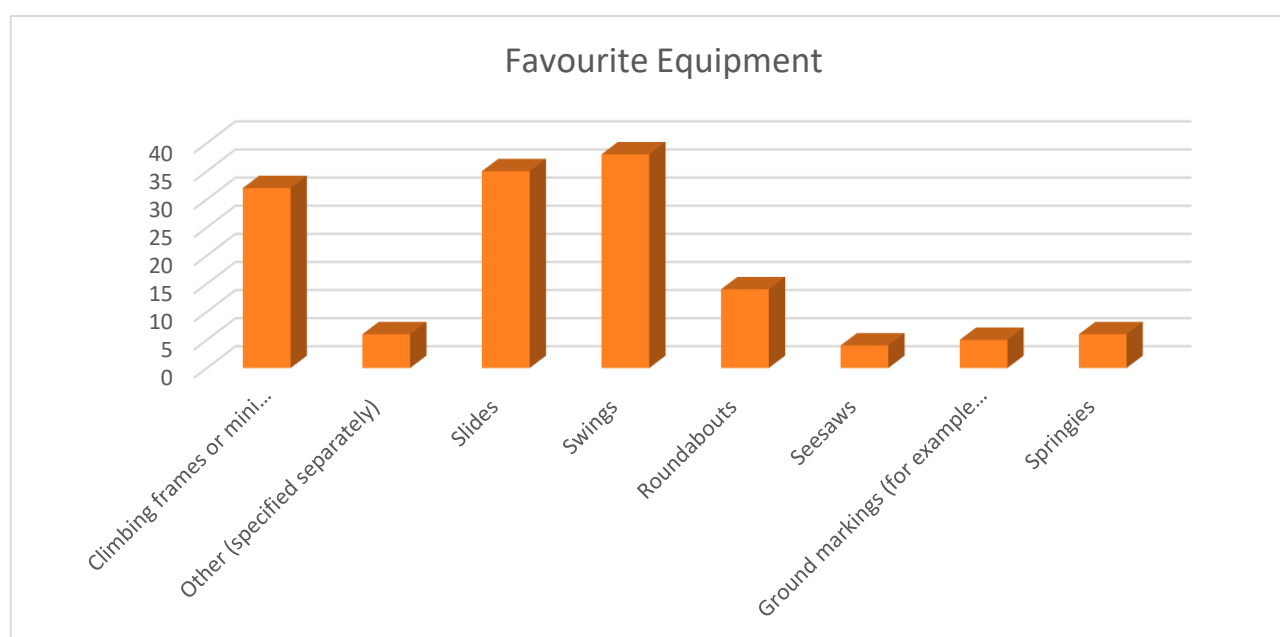
What activities do you like best?

Swinging 64%, Climbing 58%, Sliding 49%, Spinning 28%, Jumping 23%, Balancing 19%, Exploring 13%, Imagining 11%, Interacting 8%, Rocking 6%, Learning 2%, Crawling 2%.



What play equipment do you like best?

Swings 72%, Slides 66%, Climbing frames / mini climbing walls / boulders 60%, Roundabouts 26%, Springies 11%, Other 11%, Ground markings (trails and games) 9%, Seesaws 8%.



Other suggestions were...

Monkey bars
Challenge activities such as obstacle courses and monkey bars with varying difficulty levels for toddler to teenagers Activities that improve strength and general fitness. Sports activists such as basketball and football would also be brilliant.
Trampolines
The play park and football area
Zip wire
Mini trampoline built into ground like the ones in the playground in Knaresborough

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

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.

Park needs to be more suitable for all ages and kept cleaner. There is also only limited equipment so we don't tend to stay that long.
The play area looks abandoned and needs more colors and activities.
We have enjoyed the 2 different sized climbing frames/slides. The trees are overgrown at the back so the large climbing frame can become very mossy/slippery as a result.
My daughter thinks there should be an area for dogs. Nice addition would be outdoor music instruments. A planting area
There should be a separate area for smaller children as this park is always full of older boisterous kids taking over everything. There's also no provision for disabled children. This play park is also always absolutely filthy!
Absolutely. I live just over the road. The playground is filthy. The trees over hang the playground. Even the equipment making it dirty from all the mildew. It doesn't look kept at all. I know you'd never stop big kids using and abusing parks but sometimes I dread my daughter asking to go as I find it dirty. My daughter is 6 so still has a few years left if going to parks it would be nice to go and enjoy. It just need to be kept properly and the trees cut back. Some new equipment for older kids? There's so much space there to have a great park for all the local kids and kids after school etc
It needs an upgrade. Lots of school children use it after school so could do with a revamp
It needs updating, monkey bars and a better area for playing football. It needs to be better kept, its regularly covered in litter which we have to pick up each time we visit, it's often graffitied and the area seems generally run down which is such a shame as it could be a lovely park!
This play area is really really tired. It's been long neglected. It was recently the subject of offensive graffiti too. The equipment isnt too bad but needs some work to clean it up.
It would be a lovely place for the local children of two huge primary schools to have on their doorstep. It could also encourage families to cycle from further afield, making the most of the newly resurfaced cycle track!
There have been regular examples of anti social behaviour such as offensive graffiti including swastika's and 'N' word slogans. General littering is common including multiple used dog litter bags hanging from trees above the climbing frame. I would like this to be a positive, well maintained area for children of all ages to enjoy and even improve their fitness.
Play equipment insubstantial; not kept in a good condition. Parks need to accommodate pre school and upwards; for older kids football nets would be useful as there aren't any provided by council recreation spaces. No crawl tunnels as they often have teenagers hanging inside them and/or broken glass.
Some new bright colours. Take down the random fences. Different size equipment (slides/swings/tunnels) for older children and early years.
This play area is well used but needs some updating. The play equipment is so dirty, the placement of the larger climbing frame under the trees doesn't help as it means it gets covered in tree sap etc. The play equipment needs to be away from the back of the park and instead it would be more appropriate to have something like a wooden hut, wooden sculptures underneath the trees. There is good variation in this park and it is really good for smaller and bigger children. It has been neglected for so long and needs all re doing because it is so old. It would be really well used by all of the children in the local area. Please give this park some TLC the residents are in dire need of these improvements.
This play area has been quite run down for a while. It's right near a school so could do with upgrading and regularly checking. The play equipment is often filthy and covered in leaves and other play areas are well maintained.

In the summer months, teenagers regularly frequent this play area and have damaged it/littered in the past. Can you put cctv or other deterrents? I think some more toddler related things would be nice. The swings could also do with upgrading. Could there be one of those big nest swings? Maybe separate the 'grown up' kids area more than the one where the younger children play? More of a barrier? I think a bigger climbing frame and separate slide would be lovely. Thanks again for looking at improving this park. Looking forward to many years of fun!
It's dated, often very muddy and dirty. I like that it's enclosed as good for my autistic son who has no sense of danger. It would be great to have more accessible equipment there for children with special needs. I do get nervous walking there however because of the enclosed pathway sheltered from trees- doesn't always feel safe.
There needs to be a better provision for smaller children.
It needs taking care of! It's so dirty and the trees at the back are overgrown. There is bird faeces all over the climbing frame and the grass is overdue for cutting. There could be so many more activities for children. The playground is always very busy on the weekend but not enough activities to entertain both toddlers and teenagers. Could do a seesaw, markings on the ground, another smaller climbing frame but my main concern is it is just not maintained or clean. It is filthy
The play area is run down and needs upgrading
This is such a well used park buy us, and so many others, after school almost every day, but it looks tired with paint peeling and grime. I think out of all the parks in the area (and we visit a lot!) this is the one that needs the most attention.
More seating for adults. Children use the toilet in the surrounding trees, as there's no toilets at many if the parks, time spent is restricted.
I feel the following would be really great additions to the park and would be very well used by the children who play there: - wooden balancing beams to walk along - monkey bars - another climbing frame, perhaps 1 with a covered wooden structure/tree house type at the top. I would say wood as the current metal one is not cleaned frequently so gets slippy when algae/moss accumulates.
It would be nice to have a toilet nearby. Also it needs a deep clean or redesign.
The swings are good but need more accessible equipment. The playground can often be busy which is brilliant but all the equipment is old and a lot of the time it's dirty. My son has dyspraxia and struggles with the climbing frame. This isn't accessible for little ones either really. It needs updating. The roundabout is completely inaccessible to children with physical disabilities. We shouldn't have to walk to Belmont to be able to access these facilities.
This play area is very run down and small for the grass around. It is good it has the basketball court. There's often smashed glass and litter lying around. My children just don't find it very fun. It could do with an upgrade
It is very old and run down, it really needs updating
Regular grass cutting, and proper maintenance of the equipment could be vastly improved, the large slide, needs bird droppings removed more often as a hazard to use of the steps and equipment.
Needs updating as is looking aged. Space could be better used to fit more in, add benches around outside of park for parents with dogs?
I would love a toddler section that my toddler can navigate on his own
The area is a total mess. It is so sad. The play equipment is covered in green mossy algae type substance which makes it really slippy, and quite gross getting on the Childrens hands and clothes.

There is often an issue with rats in the park, which is totally not acceptable in a children's play area. Pan handle walk is a beautiful walk that's very popular it's a shame the park isn't as nice and popular.
The area feels very dingy and isolated. Unfortunately the area around the park isn't very good and it does not always feel safe. The equipment is tired and dated.
Please upgrade this play equipment it is so badly needed and with no other play park located within walking distance of our home on Hookstone it is the only one my children have regular access to.
the lights need sorting out on the path it's ridiculous how you have wasted so much money on that path when it was fine as it is you guys have made a ***** job and should be ashamed
Basket hoop and football goal. A Zip wire. Things for older kids. A place to lock bikes up. Picnic benches.
This play ground is filthy the frames all have moss and dirt growing on them, it is not suitable for children with special needs, we would go more often if it was clean and my son has special needs!
The park needs a good update. Interactive markings on the ground and a modern double seesaw, and modern built in trampolines. Please cater for the younger ages 1-6yrs as well as 6-12 inside the playground. Then outside the playground think basket ball hoops, football and benches, more benches like a picnic area
Play area should be replaced and foot ball area larger with a safer ground surface, lots of children use this park and the neglect only encourages teenagers to graffiti or make a mess. Many people use the cut through and improvements would bring more community support with the woods and more visitors to the area, it could be a great community space that local schools and business could be involved with upkeep and improvement
The play area is very run down and would benefit from some eco friendly equipment to meet the needs of a variety of ages. A larger slide and maybe an obstacle style similar to the play park on Otley Road would be a great addition. One of our favourite play park items are the large climbing nets as there is at the play park near Verity Walk Harrogate.
The play area needs to be made safer with new equipment and something that is durable as it is often broken/trashed. It needs to appeal to more ages. I would keep the football net as that is used often. I would like to see something similar to starbeck park. I think it needs: musical instruments, slides, monkey bars, swings, a climbing frame. Maybe some picnic benches. This park is very close to Hookstone school and the nursery Acorns which use the park often. I think more could also be done on the surrounding field. Add wood carvings, fairy houses, some activities for kids. Again this footpath is used by us and other families on a daily basis. Maybe add some cctv too as the kids that live on the Dalby estate have spray painted swings etc. hopefully with a better park they wouldn't do that.
The play area just needs a general upgrade
Make it more fun, it's very run down and the equipment is not challenging or fun for children
It is absolutely filthy
At present - this play park is not safe or suitable for purpose. In a highly populated area easily accessed by many it could be so much better. It would be amazing to have a park that our children were excited to go to. So fingers crossed this park gets the upgrade it desperately needs.
Keep the equipment clean, rust free, and in good order. Keep the grass trimmed. Keep the rif raf out. Put a couple of tables and benches in, for families with young kids, to sit at.
The play equipment has not changed since I used it myself as a child and I now have children myself. Unfortunately the park is not maintained at all the bushes/ trees are over growing 2 fences (one from the cemetery next fort and one from the actual park a lot of the play equipment and floor is covered in

dirt from weathering and trees and also a slippery moss like substances on the floor in some parts. I would like to see the park have a full clean, a tidy of the immediate area and potentially a disabled chair/round seat swing so my youngest who is disabled could also access a swing.

More equipment for toddlers and more interactive equipment

It needs a clean, the playground is always filthy. We have to bring wipes to give everything a clean before the kids use it. Just looks very tired and sad which is disappointing for a Harrogate play area