

Help us shape our Play Spaces

A community
consultation
feedback report
2025/26

NCC Communities Team



Help us shape our Play Spaces

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Play is essential for childhood development, wellbeing, and community life. Newcastle City Council's Play Park Investment Project aims to create four enhanced, accessible, and inclusive play spaces at **Blakelaw Park, Elswick Park, City Stadium, and Tyne Riverside Country Park**. This will be alongside improvements to seven existing neighbourhood play areas. Guided by the Newcastle Play Space Plan 2024 and Accessible and Inclusive Play Area Plan 2025, this £1.5 million investment prioritises inclusivity, safety, and community engagement.

The consultation sought to understand what local families, children, and communities value most about parks and what improvements they want to see. Over 1,200 participants contributed through online surveys, school toolkits, drop-in sessions, and targeted outreach.

Summary of Engagement Approach:

Hybrid Consultation: Online via Let's Talk Newcastle and in-person drop-ins at community venues.

Schools Engagement: Toolkits for school councils and SEND schools, creative activities like “dream playground” drawings.

Targeted Outreach: Collaboration with VCSE groups, youth organisations, and underrepresented communities.

Compliance and Inclusion: Accessible formats (Easy Read, sensory materials), adherence to equality and engagement principles.

Engagement Highlights:

In person: Four community drop-ins, two ward committee meetings.

Five schools actively participated; 73 school councillors consulted peers.

80 young people engaged via youth groups.

Online: 729 views, 90 completed forms, social media reach over 35,000.

Summary of Key Findings

Residents see parks as **vital community hubs for play, exercise, and social connection.**

Feedback emphasised:

- **Inclusivity:** Accessible equipment, ramps, sensory features, quiet spaces.
- **Safety:** Better lighting, CCTV, secure fencing, tackling antisocial behaviour.
- **Play Value:** More varied equipment for all ages, natural play elements.
- **Maintenance:** Regular cleaning, rapid repairs, litter control.
- **Comfort & Facilities:** Toilets, seating with backs/armrests, shaded areas, water fountains.
- **Community & Nature:** Planting, biodiversity, spaces for socialising and activities.

Key Findings by Park

Blakelaw Park

Issues: Lack of equipment, antisocial behaviour, poor lighting.
Community Priorities: More varied play equipment (swings, trampolines, zip wires), inclusive features, CCTV, lighting, toilets, seating, shaded areas.

City Stadium

Issues: Outdated equipment, broken swings, poor maintenance.
Community Priorities: Wider range of equipment for all ages, inclusive play, better lighting and CCTV, toilets, benches, natural play features.

Elswick Park

Issues: Run-down, litter, rats, feels unsafe.
Community Priorities: Modern equipment, inclusive features, fencing, lighting, CCTV, toilets, bins, water fountains, planting for a vibrant feel.

Tyne Riverside Country Park

Issues: Vandalism, limited play options for older children.
Community Priorities: Upgrade equipment, splash pad, inclusive play, better lighting and CCTV, toilets, seating, shaded areas, nature-friendly features.

Introduction

“We take groups to get outdoors as we do not have a space large enough at our premises.”

Online Elswick Participate, 2025



Introduction

Play is a fundamental part of childhood, shaping physical health, emotional wellbeing, and social development. **In Newcastle, we believe every child deserves the opportunity to play in spaces that are safe, inclusive, and inspiring.** The Play Park Investment Project is a key step toward achieving this vision, ensuring that our parks reflect the diverse needs of our communities and provide equal access for all.

This project aims to deliver four Enhanced, Accessible and Inclusive Play Spaces at Blakelaw Park, Riverside Country Park, Elswick Park, and City Stadium, and **improve seven neighbourhood play areas across the city.** These investments are guided by the principles set out in the Newcastle Play Space Plan 2024 and the Accessible and Inclusive Play Area Plan 2025, which embed inclusivity, sustainability, and community engagement at the heart of design and delivery.

Funding the Vision

The Play Park Investment Project represents a significant financial commitment to improving play provision across Newcastle. **Funding for this phase totals £1.5 million. This investment is targeted where it is most needed, supporting both large-scale destination parks and smaller neighbourhood play spaces.** By leveraging these funds, the Council can deliver high-quality, inclusive environments that meet the needs of children and families now and in the future.

Community at the Heart

Our approach is rooted in collaboration. **We know that the success of these spaces depends on how well they meet the needs of local children, families, and communities.** That's why engagement is central to this project. Through workshops, school activities, and targeted outreach, we will listen to voices from across Newcastle including disabled children and young people, families, and underrepresented groups to shape designs that remove barriers and create opportunities for everyone to play. This commitment aligns with national guidance, such as Scope's Campaigning for Inclusive Playgrounds, and reflects our duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty to design spaces that are accessible and welcoming.

By working together, we can create play spaces that go beyond minimum standards, places that foster community pride, encourage healthy lifestyles, and support social connection. These parks will not only provide high play value but also contribute to wider goals, including reducing inequalities, promoting wellbeing, and building liveable neighbourhoods for the future.

The success of these spaces depends on how well they meet the needs of local children, families, and communities. Engagement is therefore central to this project. Our strategy includes:

- **Hybrid Consultation:**

- Online via Let's Talk Newcastle with site plans, timelines, survey and feedback forms.
- In-Person Drop In's at neighbourhood venues.

- **Schools Engagement:**

- Design packs for school councils and SEND schools, including accessible materials and activities to gather ideas from pupils.
- Flexible formats to ensure participation from children with diverse needs featuring creative activities like “dream playground” drawings, wish lists, and sensory tables for SEND children.

- **Targeted Outreach:**

- Collaboration with VCSE groups, stay-and-play sessions, and coffee mornings for parents.
- Engagement with underrepresented groups, including disabled children, families, and ethnically diverse communities.

- **Compliance and Inclusion:**

- Adherence to GDPR, Gunning Principles, and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Accessible formats such as Easy Read and sensory materials to ensure every voice is heard.

This approach ensures that designs are informed by lived experience, removing barriers to play and creating spaces that foster community pride and wellbeing.

“For the kids. We walk and as adults we enjoy the grown up equipment. Our youngest still likes a swing. Not much for the 10 year old at Newburn now”

Online Participant, 2025

“Would be good to combine the colour contrast and the soft rubber surface”

Resident, Elswick Pool Drop In, 2025

“We need things for older children to use not just younger children”

Newcastle Youth Voice, 2025

Our Approach

“Generally the playground area is quite busy so feels safe. Pretty good lines of sight from playground to areas where the kids tend to play. Open and close to the community centre. “

Online City Stadium participate, 2025



Our Approach

Newcastle City Council's Communities Team have undertaken a community consultation and engagement exercise about play spaces in four large parks across the city. This was on behalf of the Estate and Playground Management Team, City Operations, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services. The aim of the consultation and engagement was to understand the priorities of local people in terms of how accessible and inclusive play spaces are for local people, especially children and their families.

In support of the Newcastle Accessible and Inclusive Play Area Plan and the Newcastle Play Space Plan 2024 in which recommendations were made to improve play areas in the city over the next five years. The first stage of the consultation was to focus on four sites where investment would improve accessibility and inclusive play. These sites are:

- Blakelaw Park
- City Stadium
- Elswick Park
- Tyne Riverside and Country Park

Recognising the opportunity for play potential

The aim in developing our play spaces is to support the provision of high-quality play and outdoor youth facilities sufficient to meet the needs and aspirations of Newcastle's children, young people, and their families. It was therefore a priority that local families were consulted to find out their priorities for accessible and inclusive play. The purpose of the consultation and engagement activity is to provide insight into the needs of the communities. And that decisions made about the four sites would be influenced by a range of communities who may or may not access the parks.

The Communities Team designed an effective and collaborative consultation plan that had active involvement opportunities for all people who wanted to participate. This included children and young people, disabled people and those who have English as a second language. Communities Officers used their expertise and experience to ensure the consultation activities were as accessible as possible.

Our overarching approach was to encourage people to share their experience of play parks. This is time consuming but appropriate when talking about a topic where people, especially children often tell us they don't have a voice. To ensure we adequately and authentically represented resident voices, we went back to basics and our engagement was centred around one simple question. **"Help us shape our play spaces"**.

The Communities Team worked in collaboration with:

- Local Councillors
- Newcastle City Council Landscape Design Team
- Newcastle Youth Council
- Primary Schools
- Youth Groups
- Community CVS Groups
- Ward Committees
- Local residents
- Northumbria Police
- Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue

We contacted partners from Newcastle City Council, and Community & Voluntary Groups requesting any recent reports from community consultation about green spaces, local parks and play areas.

Engagement Phases

Phase 1

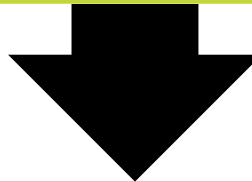
Identified key stakeholders including:

- Local Councillors
- Community and Voluntary Sector Groups
- SEND Schools
- Schools with an ARCH
- Mainstream schools via the Services to Schools platform
- Newcastle Youth Voice
- Ward Committee Meetings
- Desk top exercise to gather recent/existing park and green space community consultations



Phase 2

- Made contact with Headteachers, Community Leaders and Local Councillors via email.
- Created an online Let's Talk page.
- Designed a schools toolkit to empower school councillors to consult with their peers.
- Organised drop in venues.
- Created publicity and promoted the events via social media, or via email.
- Design an interactive consultation plan for the drop in events. This included creating consultation boards for sessions to ensure participants of all ages could participate.
- Work with Newcastle City Council Communications to create an online communication plan.



Online Engagement

Face to Face Engagement

Children and Youth Engagement

Summary of Hybrid Engagement Activity

Online Consultation

- **90 forms** completed



Online Engagement

- Let's Talk Newcastle: **729** views
- Facebook: 78 reacted, & reach **32,532**
- LinkedIn: 160 reacted & reach **3,330**



Youth Engagement

80 young people gave us their views

- Newcastle Youth Voice
- Denton Youth and Community Project junior and senior groups



Five schools participated in the consultation.

- Bridgewater Primary School
- English Martyrs RC Primary School
- Hawthorn Primary
- Hilton Primary School
- Thomas Walling Primary School



Two Ward Committee Meetings

- Blakelaw Ward Committee
- Ouseburn Ward Committee



Four Community Drop-ins

- Elswick Pool
- Newburn Leisure Centre
- Leisure United, Blakelaw
- Ouseburn Community Centre



School Engagement

Our school consultation toolkit enabled school councillors to talk to their peers about play parks.

73 school councillors played an active role consulting with their children in their school.



Over 1200 people participated in the consultation

Communication and publicity

Emails inviting people to complete the online form were circulated using the Communities Team contact list as well as

- Information Now
- Services to Schools
- Local Services mailing list



Our Partners

“Water fountain for drinks. Because I get really thirsty and I can fill my water bottle up. So instead I have to go home and I miss out.”

School Councillor, Hawthorn Primary School, 2025



Working Together for Better Parks

This section brings together key insights from recent consultations and strategic plans to inform the future of Newcastle's parks and play spaces. It summarises findings from citywide engagement exercises, highlighting priorities such as accessibility, inclusivity, safety, and biodiversity. By reviewing existing data and community feedback, the section sets out the challenges and opportunities for creating safe, welcoming, and sustainable outdoor spaces that meet the needs of all residents.

- 2024 Parks and Allotments Consultation
- 2017 Papers for Full Council (Parks Consultation)
- Newcastle Great Park SEND report
- Renewing our Public Spaces
- Shieldfield Strategic Plan

Summary of Data and Findings

2024 Parks & Allotments Consultation (NCC)

- Participation: 1,055 responses; majority Newcastle residents, older demographic (51% aged 55+), 22% with disability.
- Usage: 74% visit parks weekly or more; walking/wheeling is most common.
- Values: Access to green space (73%), free for all (47%), mental health benefits (40%), biodiversity (35%), children's play (22%).
- Barriers: Poor accessibility (paths, toilets), safety concerns, poor upkeep, lack of inclusive play facilities.
- Priorities: Accessibility, safety/security, maintenance, biodiversity.

Background Paper – 2017 Parks Consultation (NCC)

- Participation: Over 4,300 responses.

Key Themes:

- Financial sustainability and fear of decline.
- Parks as essential for health, wellbeing, and biodiversity.
- Equality of access and free use.
- Governance transparency and community involvement.
- Children's Priorities: Play equipment, grass, football areas; improvements needed in equipment, litter, and maintenance.
- Concerns: Parks falling into disrepair, commercialisation, unequal resources.
- Positive Outcomes Suggested: Clean, well-maintained parks, better facilities, safeguarding for future, community involvement.

Newcastle Great Park SEND Report (Community Led)

Key Issues:

- Most play parks inaccessible for wheelchair users due to unfinished paths and bark surfaces.
- Lack of inclusive play equipment (wheelchair swings, sensory play).
- Poor maintenance and drainage.
- Recommendations: Complete paths, replace bark with suitable surfaces, install inclusive equipment, comply with Equality Act 2010.

Renewing Our Public Spaces Report

(Community Led)

- Focus: Shieldfield public realm and MUGA.
- Findings:
 - Need for safer, more inclusive play spaces.
 - Lack of social spaces and seating.
 - Poor lighting and perceptions of safety.
 - Underused green spaces; potential for biodiversity improvements.
 - Proposals: Remove MUGA fencing, add social seating, improve lighting, extend green space, create active travel routes, co-design with community.

Shieldfield Strategic Plan (Community Led)

- Priorities: Improve play spaces for all ages, reduce traffic, enhance green spaces, address accessibility barriers.
- Themes: Community agency, biodiversity, multigenerational spaces, safer streets.
- Actions: Develop play strategy, improve lighting and seating, integrate natural play, involve residents in design.

“We meet school friends there, the park is our community living room.”

School Councillor, Bridgewater Primary School, 2025

“There is nothing for children with disabilities... all parks should be accessible for all children”

Newburn Leisure Centre Drop In event, 2025

Overarching Themes Across All Reports

- Accessibility and Inclusivity: Physical access (paths, surfaces) and inclusive play equipment.
- Safety and Security: Lighting, CCTV, anti-social behaviour prevention.
- Maintenance and Upkeep: Regular repairs, litter control, pest management.
- Community Engagement: Co-design, governance transparency, local involvement.
- Biodiversity and Sustainability: Wildlife-friendly planting, green infrastructure.

Top 5 Frequently Mentioned Issues

- Poor accessibility for disabled users.
- Lack of inclusive play facilities for children with SEND.
- Safety concerns (lighting, anti-social behaviour).
- Insufficient maintenance and cleanliness.
- Need for biodiversity and greener spaces.

Our Findings

“We want to see more accessibility, wide gates for prams, slopes for wheelchairs users”

Newcastle Youth Voice, 2025



What people told us about going to play parks

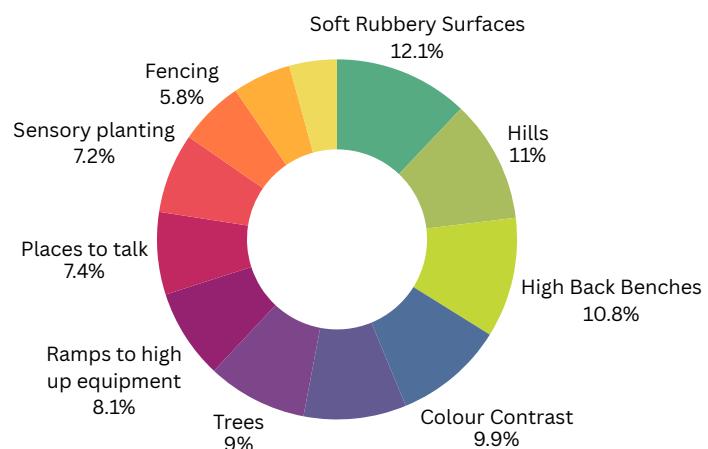
Our parks and play spaces are at the heart of community life, offering places for children to play, families to connect, and everyone to enjoy fresh air and nature. These findings bring together voices from online surveys, local drop-in sessions, and on-site consultations to understand what people value most about their parks and what improvements they want to see. It reflects a shared commitment to creating safe, inclusive, and welcoming spaces where all generations can come together, and sets out the priorities and ideas that residents have told us matter most.

People go to parks to be outside together mostly with children because they're local, free and social; they love the space and green setting, and they're asking us to renew, include and care for play spaces so everyone can play safely and with dignity.

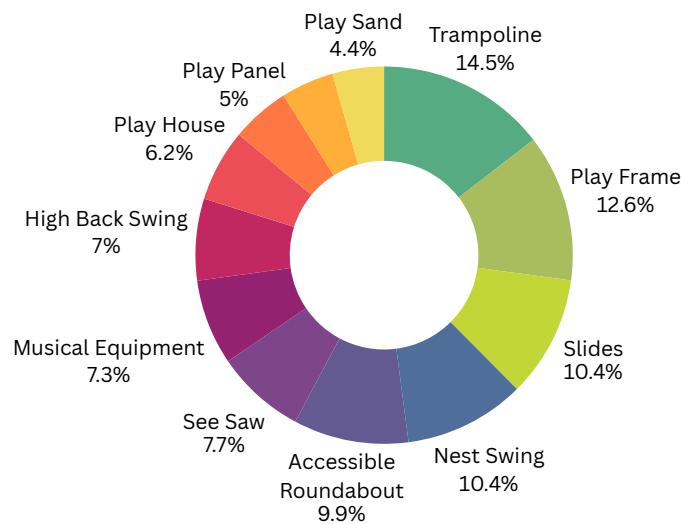
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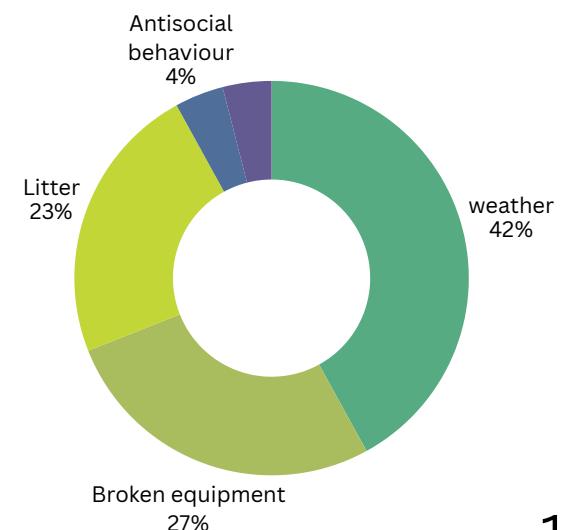
Which features would you like to see in parks?



Which equipment would you like to see in parks?



What stops people going to a park?



The Bigger Picture

Why do you go to a park?

Across the online responses, the most common motivation was simple and powerful: **to give children space to play, move and develop**. Parents and carers talked about letting kids “burn off energy”, “have fun with friends”, and experience play they cannot easily provide at home.

A second strong thread was **fresh air, movement and headspace for everyone** walks, runs, scooting and being active together, often as part of daily routines before or after school. People linked parks with wellbeing and mental health as much as with play.

Residents also emphasised **convenience and location** popping in because a park is close to home, on the school route, or next to the leisure centre or pool. When a park is nearby and open, families use it frequently; when it’s too far, hard to find, or closed, they go less.

Some people described **nature and green space** trees, flowers, big skies, wildlife and a few mentioned **dog-walking** as part of a family outing.

“Outdoor free fun... fresh air... a place our kids can meet other kids.”

Online Participant, 2025

“It’s next to school— perfect for a run-around with friends after pick-up.”

Online participant, 2025

“I like being outside and playing—less screen time.”

School Councillor - Bridgewater Primary, 2025

Who do you go to a park with?

The overwhelming picture is **children first**, parents with their children, grandparents with grandchildren, and families meeting other families. Many also go with **friends**; some go alone for a quiet walk or to exercise the dog; and a smaller group come as part of **community/youth groups**.

Feedback at the drop-ins echoed this, children talked about going **with siblings and friends**, and adults described parks as a natural spot to **bump into neighbours and meet other parents**.

What's the best thing about going to a park?

Residents most often mentioned space; room to run, kick a ball and feel free, plus the green, open setting. The convenience of having a park nearby (and visibly open) also mattered, along with equipment variety (swings, climbing frames, basket swings, trampolines). Where play areas feel enclosed and visible, carers say it's easier to relax while children explore. And when lots of families are around, the park feels friendly and safe.

At the drop-ins, children told us their favourite equipment was “spinny things”, swings, trampolines, zip wires, and big slides; they also loved soft/safe surfacing and quiet corners when things feel overwhelming. Adults highlighted clear sightlines, seating, and places to rest between activities.

How can we improve play parks?

Community ideas were consistent across the online survey, drop-ins, and the planner conversations with local Councillors. Together, they point to eight practical priorities:

More and better play equipment (for a wider age range).



People want enough, durable kit that's exciting for toddlers through to tweens/teens - **more swings, challenging climbing/monkey bars, basket or group swings, zip wire, pump/bike/scooter track**, and opportunities for imaginative play. Families asked for equipment that **multiple children can use at once** so there's less queuing and fewer conflicts.

Inclusive and accessible play as standard.



Requests were clear: **wheelchair-accessible swings and roundabouts, ramps to higher platforms, sensory panels/music, quiet spaces, and clear routes/surfaces** that work for mobility scooters and prams not bark or loose sand where that blocks access. Officers also heard suggestions for **height-adjustable play panels** and allowing **space inside playhouses** so a wheelchair user and friends can play together.

Maintenance and cleanliness: fix what's broken, clean what's dirty.



Broken kit, burnt or missing pieces, **litter and glass**, and **evidence of drug/alcohol use put people off**. Regular checks, **rapid repairs**, and more **bins in the right places** (especially near MUGAs/play areas and key entrances) were common asks; some residents already **litter-pick** but want the basics to be reliable.

Safety, lighting and feeling watched over.



Many mentioned **antisocial behaviour**, especially at dusk and in dark corners. People suggested **CCTV, better lighting along paths and near play areas, and a visible warden/patrol presence** at busy times. Planners also discussed lighting options and the balance of safety vs. encouraging evening use.

Fencing, gates and keeping dogs out of play zones.



Families value **fenced, finger-safe gates** with **soft-close mechanisms**. Where dogs run through play areas, people asked for **secure boundaries** and clear “**no dogs**” zones. Some also asked for small **bike stands inside** the play area so children can arrive and park safely.



Seating, shade and places to be together.

Parents/carers want **benches with backs and armrests, accessible picnic tables, and shelter/shade** to stay longer in summer or light rain. Grouped seating (not just in a line) helps socialising and is especially valued by girls and caregivers who want to sit together but still have full visibility.



Good surfaces and paths.

People asked for **soft, level surfacing** under equipment, **tactile cues** for visually-impaired users, and **clear, wider paths/drop kerbs** that connect entrances, crossings and desire lines so everyone can get in and around the park more easily. (Officers noted resurfacing needs, drop-kerb alignment, and the possibility of tactile qualities in wet-pour surfacing.)



Toilets, café and information.

Nearby **toilets** (and keeping them open in the day) help families stay longer. People also suggested **QR-code signage** and a **public web page** listing each park's facilities, accessibility features and opening info so families can plan visits with confidence.

Summary

Play parks are an important part of the community. The feedback shows a clear and consistent message: parks matter because they **provide free, local spaces for play, exercise, and community connection**. Families value open green areas and safe, well-maintained play equipment, but they also want parks to be inclusive, accessible, and welcoming for all ages and abilities.

The priorities are practical, better and more varied equipment, improved safety and lighting, clean and cared-for spaces, and features like seating, toilets, and clear information.

By acting on these ideas, we can create play spaces that reflect the voices of our communities and ensure that every child and family has a place to enjoy, belong, and thrive.

A closer look at our four parks

“Parks are important for us (children). And children are important as well. They need to get it right and listen to us”

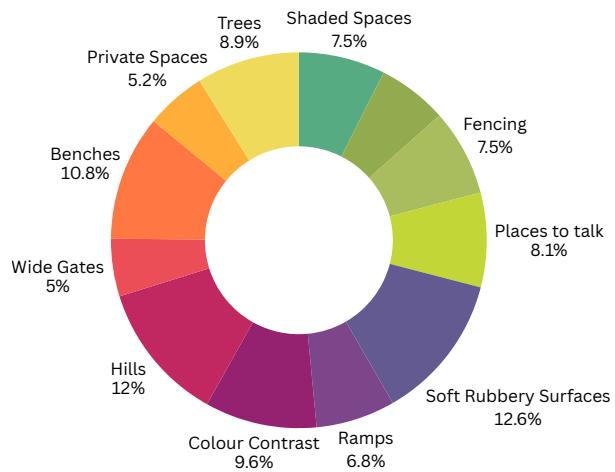
School Councillor, Hawthorn Primary School. (2025)



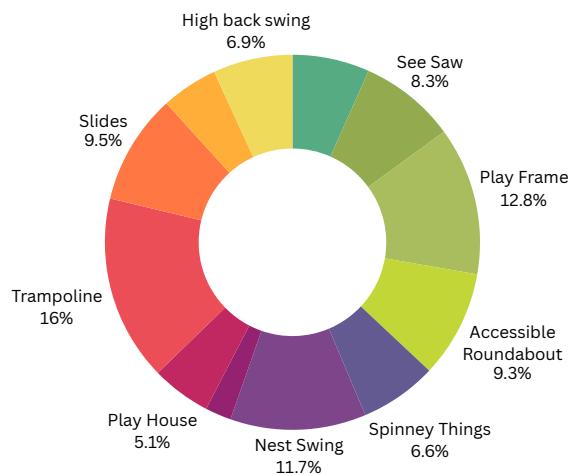
Blakelaw Park

- **Issues:** Lack of equipment, antisocial behaviour, poor lighting.
- **What you want:** More swings, climbing frames, quiet spaces, CCTV.

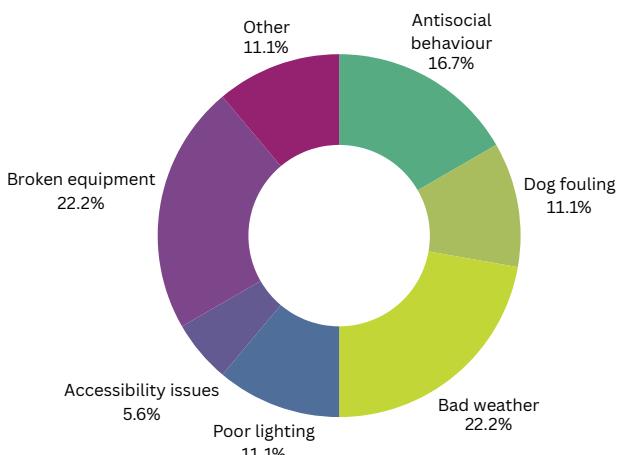
Which features would you like to see in Blakelaw Park?



Which equipment would you like to see in Blakelaw Park?



What stops people going to Blakelaw park?



“It would be good to have benches in the park. I walk around the field to get my steps in and it would be helpful to have somewhere to sit and have a break”

Resident , Blakelaw Ward Committee, 2025



Introduction

Blakelaw Park is a vital green space for local families, offering a place to play, walk, and connect with nature. The park is situated north-west of the city centre. Community feedback shows that residents value having somewhere close to home where children can run, ride scooters, and meet friends. For many, the park is the only accessible outdoor area in the neighbourhood, making it an important part of daily life and wellbeing.

Why do you go to Blakelaw Park?

Families in Blakelaw told us they go to the park for simple, vital reasons: **to give children space to play, run and let off steam**, and to enjoy fresh air without cost. Parents described the park as “**the only available area around Blakelaw to get some exercise and enjoy the outdoors**” and a place to “**explore and play in the outdoors**.”

For many, it’s about breaking up the day—walking, scooting, or playing football—and creating memories together. Some mentioned mental health benefits and the chance to meet friends after school. Others said they visit because it’s local and connected to the leisure centre, making it convenient for families juggling activities.

Who do you go to Blakelaw Park with?

The park is a family space first and foremost. Most people go **with their children**, often bringing siblings or cousins, and sometimes grandparents join too. Friends feature strongly—parents meeting other parents, children playing together, and community groups using the space for outdoor activities. A few residents said they visit alone for a walk or to exercise the dog, but the dominant picture is of **families** and friends gathering in a shared space.

What's the best thing about going to Blakelaw Park?

People value the **open space and freedom to play**, even when equipment is limited. They like that the park is fenced and feels connected to the leisure centre, which gives a sense of safety. Children spoke about loving swings, slides, trampolines, and “spinny things,” while parents appreciated having somewhere local for bikes and scooters. When the park feels busy with families, it feels welcoming and safe. However, many noted that there isn’t much to do—“it’s more of an empty field”—and that the best thing is simply having a **space to be outdoors together**.

“The park needs to be fixed now so we can play.”

Online Participant, 2025

“It’s really important that you think about toilets—I always have to go home when any of us need to go.”

Resident, Blakelaw Drop In, 2025

“It would be good to have a space to go to when it gets too noisy. I sometimes get overwhelmed and need a quiet place to go to calm myself.”

School Councillor, Hilton Primary, 2025

How can we improve play spaces in Blakelaw park?

The community was clear and passionate about what Blakelaw Park needs:



More and better equipment for all ages. Residents asked for bigger swings and slides, climbing frames, trampolines, zip wires, and sensory play panels. They want areas for toddlers and older children, plus features like a skatepark or football space.



Inclusive play. Families called for wheelchair-accessible equipment, ramps, and quiet areas for children who get overwhelmed. Sensory features and soundproofing were suggested to support children with additional needs.



Safety and security. People raised concerns about antisocial behaviour, broken glass, and dog fouling. They want CCTV, better lighting, and gates to keep dogs out. Some suggested locking the park at night to prevent damage.



Maintenance and cleanliness. Litter, graffiti, and damaged equipment were frequent complaints. Residents want regular cleaning and quick repairs.



Comfort and facilities. Toilets were a big ask—parents said they often have to leave early when a child needs the bathroom. More seating, picnic tables, and shaded areas would help families stay longer.



Clear information. Signs to show the park is welcoming and details about opening times would make visits easier.

Summary

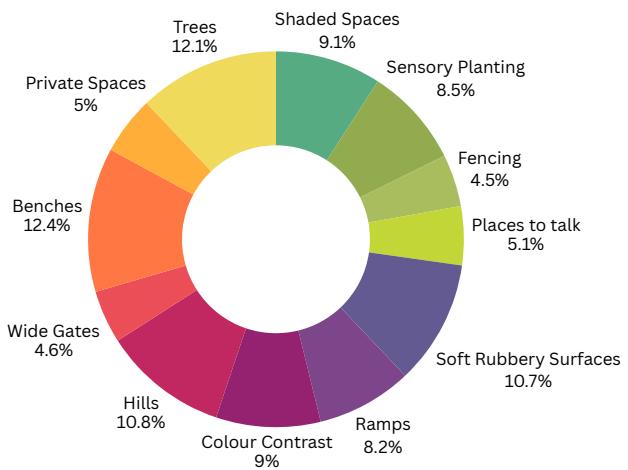
People love Blakelaw Park for its open space and convenience, but they want more from it. The community is asking for better and more varied play equipment for all ages, inclusive features for children with additional needs, and practical improvements like toilets, seating, and shaded areas.

Safety and cleanliness are top priorities, with calls for lighting, CCTV, and secure fencing to tackle antisocial behaviour and dog fouling. By addressing these issues, Blakelaw Park can become a welcoming, vibrant space where everyone feels safe and included.

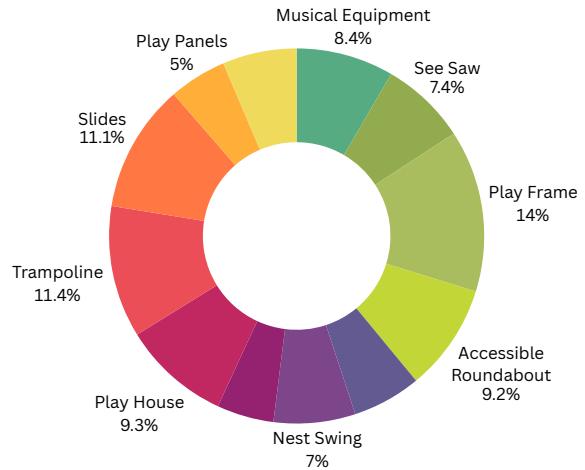
City Stadium

- **Issues:** Outdated equipment, broken swings, poor maintenance.
- **What you want:** Bigger play area, natural play features, seating for parents.

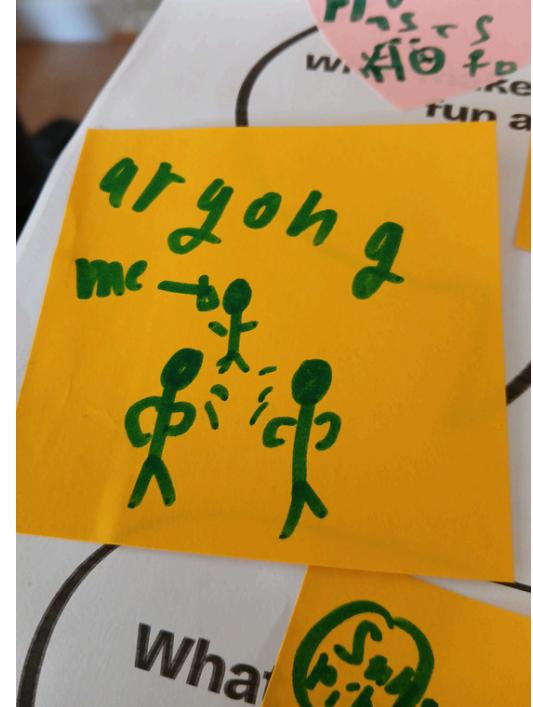
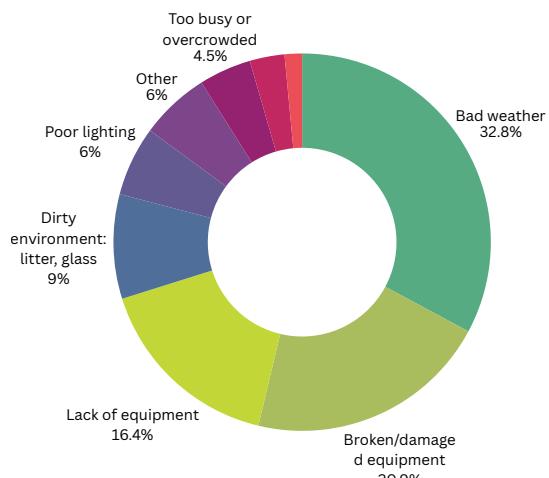
Which features would you like to see in City Stadium?



Which equipment would you like to see in City Stadium?



What stops people going to City Stadium?



“Make spaces better for girls. Provide better lighting. Wider entrances and multiply exist.”

Resident, Ouseburn Community Centre drop In, 2025



Introduction

City Stadium is a well-used community space, sitting at the heart of school routes and local routines. Families rely on it for quick access to fresh air, play, and social time after school or at weekends. It's a place where children can burn off energy, parents can meet, and neighbours can connect—all without cost. The play park is situated close to Ouseburn Community Centre and Hotspur Primary School. Feedback from residents shows how much this park matters and highlights what needs to change to make it safer, more inclusive, and more enjoyable for everyone.

Why do you go to City Stadium play park?

Families and residents visit City Stadium for **fresh air, exercise, and a safe space for children to play and socialise**. Parents described it as a convenient stop before or after school—“**to burn off children’s energy**” and “**let our kids meet and interact with friends**.” For many, the park is the closest green space, making it a go-to for quick outdoor time, football, or a walk with the dog. People also spoke about mental wellbeing—“**a moment of mindfulness**”—and the importance of having somewhere free and local to enjoy nature.

Who do you go to City Stadium play park with?

City Stadium is a **family hub**. Most respondents go with their children, often joined by friends or extended family. Grandparents feature too, and some residents come with community or youth groups. A few visit alone for a walk or to exercise the dog, but the dominant picture is of **families and friends gathering after school or at weekends**, turning the park into a social meeting point.

What's the best thing about going to City Stadium play park?

People love the **location and open space**, it's near schools and feels easy to access. The grassy areas and MUGA give room for football and free play, while the climbing frames and swings are popular with younger children. Parents value being able to “**scan and keep an eye on children**” thanks to the park’s layout. When the park is busy with families, it feels safe and welcoming. However, many noted that equipment is limited or broken, and older children often get bored. The best thing, for most, is simply having **a local space to play and connect with others**.

“The best place for my kids to let off some energy and play with their friends—but there’s very few play equipment.”

Online Participant, 2025

“Lighting and cameras would make it feel safer, especially in winter.”

Resident, Ouseburn Ward Committee, 2025

“Lots of grass to do cartwheels and hand stands.”

Child, Ouseburn Community Centre Drop In, 2025

How can we improve play spaces in City Stadium?

The community shared clear priorities for City Stadium:



More and better equipment for all ages. Families want a greater variety of play items—zip wires, monkey bars, climbing frames, trampolines, and pump tracks for bikes and scooters. They asked for separate zones for toddlers, older children, and teens, so everyone has something to enjoy.



Inclusive play. Residents called for accessible swings and roundabouts, ramps, and sensory play panels to make the park welcoming for children with disabilities.



Safety and security. Concerns about antisocial behaviour, broken glass, and poor lighting were common. People want CCTV, better lighting (especially in winter), and fencing to keep dogs out. Safer crossings near the park entrance were also suggested.



Maintenance and cleanliness. Broken equipment, litter, and vandalism put families off. Quick repairs and regular cleaning are essential.



Comfort and facilities. Toilets and a small café were frequent requests, along with more benches, shaded areas, and bins. Parents said these changes would help them stay longer and feel more comfortable.



Natural play and landscaping. Ideas included tree trunks, sand, water features, and planting areas to make the park feel greener and more adventurous.

Summary

People value City Stadium for its location and open space, but they want more from it. The community is asking for a wider range of play equipment for all ages, inclusive features for children with disabilities, and practical improvements like toilets, seating, and shaded areas.

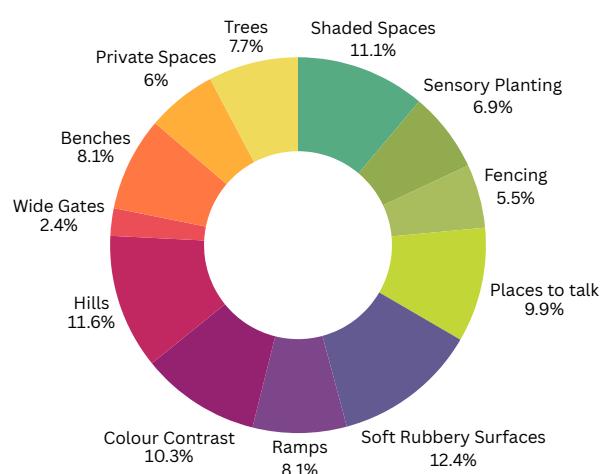
Safety is a major concern, with calls for better lighting, CCTV, and fencing to keep dogs out. Residents also want regular maintenance, cleaner spaces, and natural play elements to make the park feel greener and more inviting.

By acting on these priorities, City Stadium can become a vibrant, welcoming space where families and friends feel safe, included, and proud to spend time.

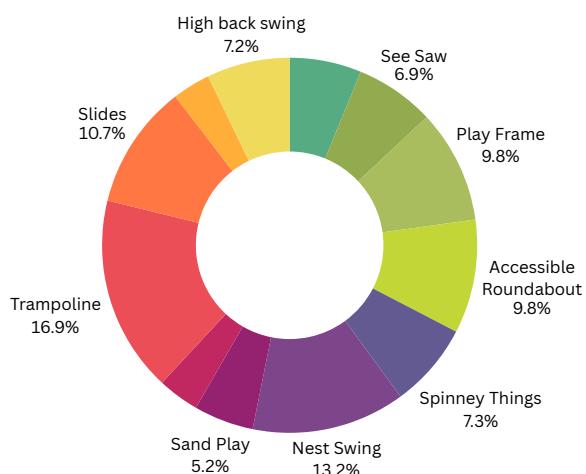
Elswick Park

- **Issues:** Run-down, litter, rats, feels unsafe.
- **What you want:** Modern equipment, better lighting, bins, and patrols.

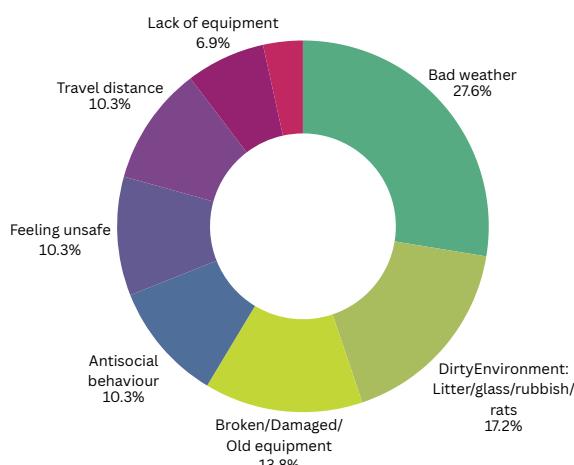
Which features would you like to see in Elswick Park?



Which equipment would you like to see in Elswick Park?



What stops people going to Elswick Park?



“If there is a shelter it means we can stay at the park for longer even if its raining”

Child, Elswick Pool drop in, 2025



Introduction

Elswick Park is a much-loved green space in the heart of the community, offering families a place to play, relax, and connect with nature. For many, it's a convenient stop before or after swimming lessons at the nearby pool, and a vital space for children to run, climb, and make friends. Located within the west of the city the park is a stones throw from the centre of Newcastle. Community feedback shows how important this park is—and how much residents want to see it improved to make it safer, cleaner, and more inclusive.

Why do you go to Elswick park?

Residents visit Elswick Park for **fresh air, exercise, and time outdoors with family**. Parents said they go **“to get the kids out of the house and off their devices,”** while others enjoy walking, relaxing, and spending time in nature. Many families combine park visits with trips to Elswick Pool, making the location convenient for play before or after swimming lessons. For children, the park is about fun and freedom—running, climbing, and playing with friends.

Who do you go to Elswick park with?

Elswick Park is a **family and community space**. Most people go with their children or grandchildren, often meeting friends or other families while there. Some come alone for a walk or to enjoy nature, but the dominant picture is of **parents, carers, and children gathering together**, turning the park into a social hub for the neighbourhood.

What's the best thing about going to Elswick park?

People love the size and green space of Elswick Park, **“it's very big and lots of green space”**, and its proximity to the pool and local homes. Families appreciate having somewhere **free** and local to play, picnic, and relax. Children mentioned swings, slides, and monkey bars as favourite features, while adults valued the open space for games and the chance to meet others. However, many noted that the play area feels old and run down, and the best thing is simply having **a large outdoor space close to home**.

“The park needs a very good clean and the equipment needs updating.”

Online Participant, 2025

“Better lighting and cameras would make it feel safer.”

Resident, Elswick Pool Drop In, 2025

“Cutback trees and shrubs. Sometimes when we play ball games the ball gets stuck in the hedges and you can't get it back out.”

School Councillor, Hawthorn Primary School, 2025

How can we improve play at Elswick Park?

The community shared clear priorities for Elswick Park:



Upgrade and expand play equipment. Residents want modern, safe equipment—bigger slides, trampolines, monkey bars, climbing frames, and sand play. Children asked for fun features like zip wires and obstacle courses.



Inclusive and accessible play. Suggestions included ramps for wheelchair users, sensory play panels, and spaces for children who need quiet areas.



Safety and security. People raised concerns about antisocial behaviour, broken glass, and even rats. They want fencing, better lighting, and CCTV to make the park feel safe, especially in darker months.



Maintenance and cleanliness. The park “feels uncared for and dirty,” with calls for regular cleaning, cutting back overgrown trees, and quick repairs to broken equipment.



Comfort and facilities. Toilets were a major request, along with more bins, benches, shaded areas, and water fountains. Parents said these changes would help families stay longer.



Community and nature. Residents suggested planting more flowers and trees, adding bike tracks, and creating spaces for clubs and activities to bring people together.

Summary

People value Elswick Park for its size, greenery, and location, but they are clear that the play area feels outdated and uncared for. The community is asking for modern, varied equipment, inclusive features for children with disabilities, and practical upgrades like toilets, bins, and seating.

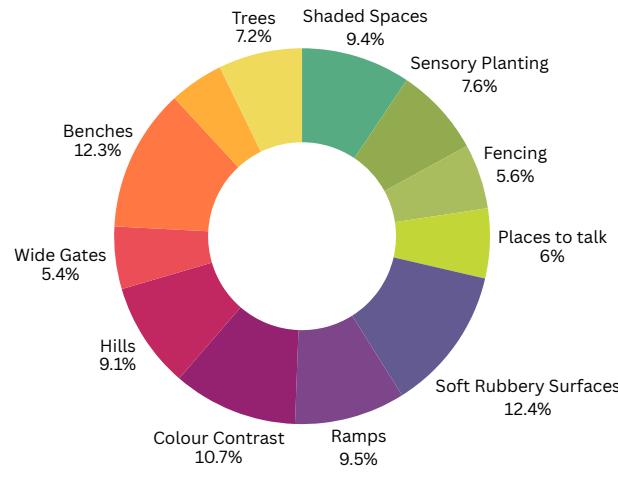
Safety is a major concern, with calls for better lighting, CCTV, and fencing to tackle antisocial behaviour and keep dogs out. Residents also want regular maintenance, cleaner spaces, and more planting to make the park feel welcoming and vibrant.

By acting on these priorities, Elswick Park can become a safe, inclusive space where families and friends can enjoy spending time together.

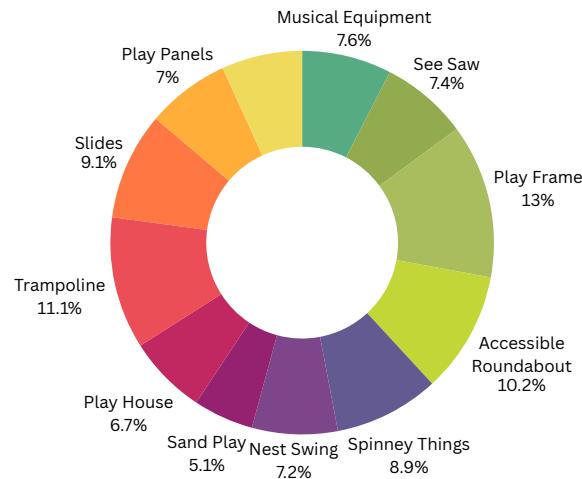
Tyne Riverside Country Park

- **Issues:** Vandalism, limited play options for older kids.
- **What you want:** Splash pad, picnic areas, accessible equipment.

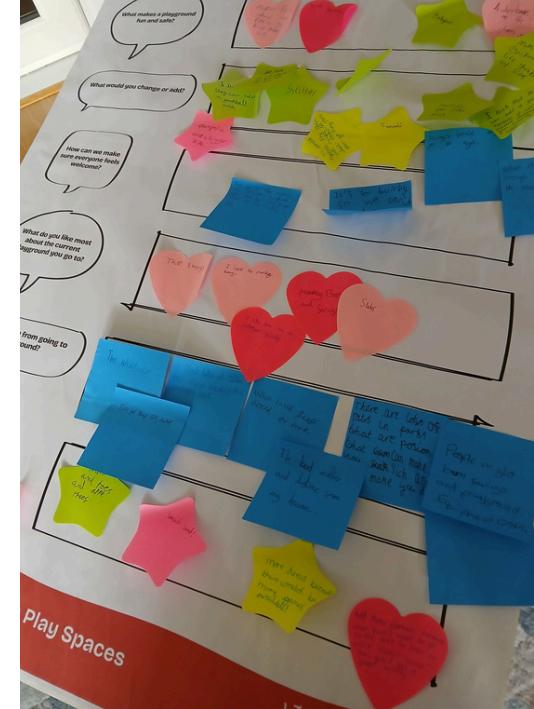
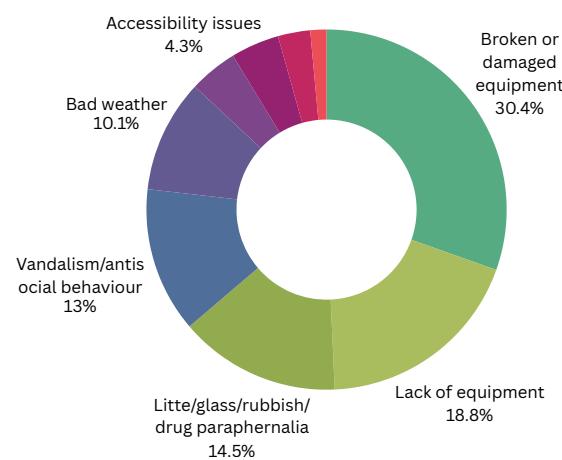
Which features would you like to see in Tyne Riverside Country Park ?



Which equipment would you like to see in Tyne Riverside Country Park ?



What stops people going to Tyne Riverside Country Park ?



“To have fun and play. Exercise and fresh air rather than screen time”

Online Newburn Riverside Park participant, 2025



Introduction

Tyne Riverside Country Park is a cherished green space along the river, offering families a place to play, walk, and enjoy nature. Located in the outer west of the city, for many, it's a local escape from screens and a chance to spend time outdoors with children, friends, and even the family dog. Community feedback shows how much this park matters—and how strongly residents feel about improving it so it can be safe, inclusive, and welcoming for everyone.

Why do you go to Tyne Riverside Country Park?

Families visit Tyne Riverside Country Park for **fresh air, exercise, and time outdoors together**. Parents said they go “**to give children a safe space to play**” and “**to spend quality time together outside in the fresh air**.” Many enjoy walking or cycling along the river, combining play with nature and dog walks. For children, the park is about fun and freedom; running, climbing, and playing on swings and slides. Residents also value the park as a free, local alternative to screen time and as a way to meet friends and neighbours.

Who do you go to Tyne Riverside Country Park with?

Tyne Riverside Country Park is a **family-oriented space**. Most people go with their children, often joined by friends, grandparents, or other family members. Some visit with community groups, and a few come alone for a walk or to exercise their dog. The park is seen as a social hub where families meet and children play together, making it an important part of local life.

What's the best thing about going to Tyne Riverside Country Park?

Residents love the location and natural setting—“**a great place next to the river so we can play and go for a walk/cycle along**.” The park’s size and open space make it ideal for games, picnics, and family time. People appreciate the parking and paths for bikes and scooters, and the chance to enjoy nature while children play. However, many noted that the equipment is **old, broken, or too limited**, especially for older children, and that litter and vandalism spoil the experience. The best thing, for most, is simply having a local green space with room to play and relax.

“The equipment was better quality and more up to date, it would be brilliant.”

Online Participant, 2025

“Lighting and cameras would make it feel safer, especially at night.”

Participant at Newburn Leisure Centre Drop In, 2025

“I love rolling down hills to make me feel like I am flying.”

Young Person from Denton Youth and Community Project, 2025

How can we improve the play park at Tyne Riverside Country Park?

The community shared clear priorities for Tyne Riverside Country Park:



Upgrade and expand play equipment. Families want modern, safe equipment for all ages—bigger swings and slides, climbing frames, trampolines, monkey bars, and imaginative play features. Children asked for zip wires, obstacle courses, and even themed areas.



Inclusive and accessible play. Suggestions included ramps for wheelchair users, sensory play panels, and equipment that works for mixed ages and abilities.



Safety and security. Concerns about antisocial behaviour, broken glass, and dogs were common. People want fencing, CCTV, and better lighting, especially in darker months. Safer access and clear boundaries near the river were also requested.



Maintenance and cleanliness. Residents called for regular cleaning, quick repairs, and more bins to tackle litter and dog fouling.



Comfort and facilities. Toilets were a major ask, along with more seating, picnic tables, shaded areas, and water fountains. Parents said these changes would help families stay longer.



Nature and community. Ideas included planting more trees and flowers, adding bike tracks, and creating spaces for clubs and activities to bring people together.

Summary

People value Tyne Riverside Country Park for its location, natural setting, and open space, but they are clear that the play area feels outdated and poorly maintained. The community is asking for modern, varied equipment for all ages, inclusive features for children with disabilities, and practical upgrades like toilets, seating, and shaded areas.

Safety is a major concern, with calls for better lighting, CCTV, fencing, and regular maintenance to tackle vandalism, litter, and dog fouling. Residents also want more bins, cleaner spaces, and nature-friendly features to make the park vibrant and inviting.

By acting on these priorities, Tyne Riverside Country Park can become a safe, accessible space where families and friends can enjoy quality time together.

Conclusion, Recommendations and Next Steps



Working Together for Better Parks

Conclusion

The consultation has shown that our parks are more than play spaces, they are vital community hubs where families connect, children grow, and wellbeing thrives.

Residents have told us clearly: they want safe, inclusive, and well-maintained parks that reflect the diversity of our city and provide opportunities for all ages and abilities. From accessible equipment and sensory features to better lighting, seating, and toilets, the priorities shared by our communities are practical and achievable.

By listening and acting on these voices, we can create spaces that foster pride, belonging, and joy for generations to come.

Recommendations



Embed Inclusivity in Design

Ensure all new and refurbished play spaces meet accessibility standards and include features for children with SEND and mobility needs.



Prioritise Safety and Maintenance

Improve lighting, install CCTV where appropriate, and implement regular cleaning and rapid repair schedules to keep parks safe and welcoming.



Enhance Play Value for All Ages

Provide a variety of equipment suitable for toddlers, older children, and teens, alongside natural play elements and quiet spaces.



Invest in Comfort and Facilities

Add seating with backs and armrests, shaded areas, toilets, and access to drinking water to support longer, more enjoyable visits.



Strengthen Community Engagement

Continue co-design approaches, involving residents, schools, and youth groups in shaping future improvements and monitoring progress.

Working Together for Better Parks

The journey doesn't end with listening, it begins with action.

The ideas and priorities of children, young people, families, residents and our partners will now shape the plans for our parks, ensuring they reflect the voices of the people who use them every day.

Together, we will turn feedback into real improvements, from inclusive play equipment to safer, cleaner spaces and better facilities for families.

These next steps outline how we'll keep the conversation going, share progress openly, and work hand-in-hand with our communities to create parks that everyone can enjoy.

1. Funding and Partnerships:

Secure additional resources and explore partnerships with local businesses and voluntary groups to support delivery.

5. Design Phase:

Work with landscape architects and community representatives to incorporate feedback into detailed plans for each park.



2. Communication:

Share timelines and updates through Let's Talk Newcastle, social media, and community networks to keep residents informed and involved.

4. Implementation: Begin phased improvements at the four priority parks, ensuring visible progress and opportunities for ongoing feedback.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish a community-led review process to assess impact, celebrate successes, and identify future needs.

Closing comments and thanks

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who participated in this consultation. Your voices have shaped the priorities and vision for our parks.

Special thanks to local residents, schools, youth groups, community organisations, ward committees, and our partners across Newcastle City Council for their invaluable contributions. Together, we are building inclusive, safe, and vibrant spaces for all.

An extra special thank you to

- Rosie Bell from Denton Youth and Community Project for delivering some of the workshops to young people.
- School Councillors from Bridgewater Primary, Hawthorn Primary, Hilton Primary and Thomas Walling Primary Academy for consulting with their classmates about features and pieces of equipment we should see in play parks.
- School Councillors from English Martyrs Catholic Primary School who designed their dream play parks.

Thank
you!



Appendix

“To get the kids out of the house and off their devices, to hopefully play with other children at the park, play on the equipment, get some fresh air and exercise.”

Online Elswick Park participant, 2025



Appendix Index

Maps

- Overall Scheme Board: Help us shape our play spaces
- Blakelaw
- City Stadium
- Elswick Park
- Tyne Riverside and Country Park

Drop In Engagement Tools

- Equipment Tally Board
- Feature Tally Board
- Comments Board

Example of a school activity

- Design your dream park

Questions from the online Survey

Help Shape the City's Play Spaces!



Newcastle City Council is inviting local community groups, families, and residents to have your say on ideas for new/ improved play areas in the city! Share your ideas, priorities, and feedback with our design team and council officers.

Let's work together to create play spaces that are accessible, inclusive, and fun for everyone!

Come along to one of our sessions or get involved with our online form!



1. Tyne Riverside Country Park



2. Blakelaw Park



3. Elswick Park



4. City Stadium



Scan Me



Help Shape the City's Play Spaces

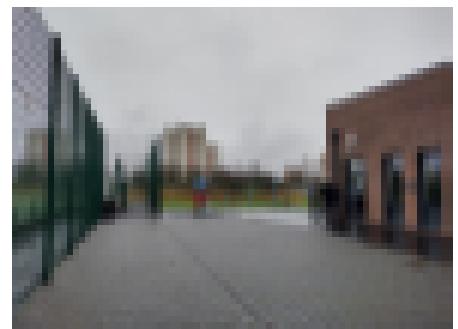
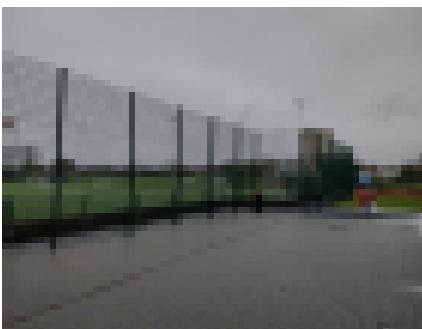
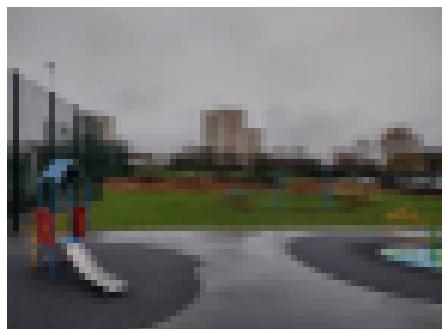
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Blakelaw Park



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City Stadium



Aerial Photo of Existing Park



Help Shape the City's Play Spaces

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Elswick Park



Aerial Photo of Existing Park



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Tyne Riverside Country Park



Aerial Photo of Existing Park



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Which equipment would you like to see in the park?



Musical Equipment



See Saw



Play Frame
For exploring & Climbing



Accessible Roundabout



Spinny Things



Nest Swing



Sand Play



Play House



Trampoline



Slides



Play Panels



High Back Swing

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Which features would you like to see in the park?



Shaded areas



Sensory Planting



Fencing



Places to talk



Soft rubbery floor surfaces



Ramps to high up equipment



Colour Contrast



Hills for Rolling Down



Wide Gates



Benches with backs and arm rests



Private Spaces



Trees for playing hide & seek

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Tell us what you think.....?

What makes a playground fun and safe?

What would you change or add?

How can we make sure everyone feels welcome?

What do you like most about the current playground you go to?

What stops you from going to the playground?

What natural features like trees, flowers, hills, and sand would you like?

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Help Shape the City's Play Spaces

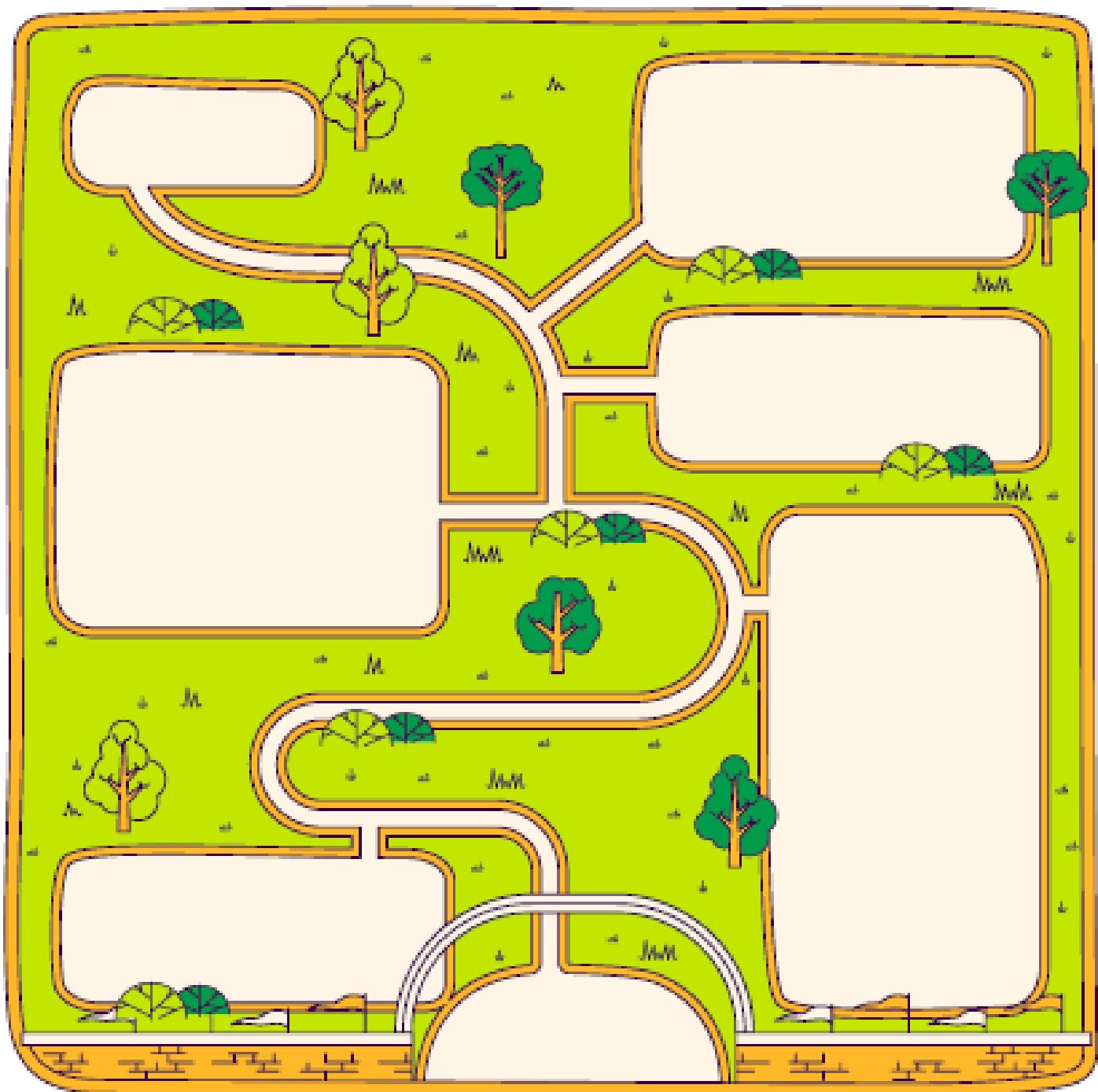
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Dream Playground

My design for the perfect playground



Online Survey Questions

- When you go to the park who do you go with? (multi choice)
- Who do you meet at the park? (multi choice)
- Who do you meet at the park?
- What prevents you from going to a play park?
- Which park would you like to tell us about? (multi choice)
- Why do you go to this park?
- What do you like to do at the park? (multiple)
- What is good about this play park?
- What would make this play park better?
- What equipment would you like to see in a park? Please put the equipment in your favourite order
- What features would you like to see in the park? Please put the equipment in your favourite order
- What stops you going to the play park?
- Do you feel safe in the park? (multi choice)
- What makes the park feel safe?
- What makes the park feel unsafe?

Help us shape our play park



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Prepared for

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**If you would like to discuss this report further or
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