

THE REQUEST : PLAY AND DISABILITY:

“We are currently consulting and gathering best practice and guidance as part of the development of our latest play action plan. One area that is causing conflicting views among our local councillors is how to provide play equipment that is suitable for use by less able. Obviously we as officers will be providing equipment as routine that is specifically designed to be accessible by all, but we are getting councillor pressure to provide specific equipment and in specific, almost exclusive play areas.

Could members please share how they approach provision of accessible equipment and more widely how they address accessibility in play areas;

do you provide more equipment in fewer areas
 or try to provide some in all for example
 and how did you make that evaluation?

Any help you can offer will be very well received. We are obviously consulting accessibility groups and such organisations within the borough but I would appreciate of provision examples elsewhere if at all possible.”

	OVERVIEW OF RESPONSE	MORE DETAILS
BOURNEMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL Michael Rowland	We try to avoid equipment which is designed solely for children with disabilities and is of little fun for able bodied children as best value comes from inclusive equipment. We have very few complaints with our approach.	<p>We try to provide a mix of equipment to suit different ages and abilities in all our parks wherever possible.</p> <p>When designing new spaces we try to add accessible paths and other features which we may not have in older spaces.</p> <p>Space design can also help - including sensory features - sand pits, willow tunnels, bright and fragrant planting, sculpture etc. Spaces for story telling.</p> <p>Great inclusive items are nest swings, accessible roundabouts, sculpture and trails.</p> <p>We design playgrounds in-house through our Landscape Team and always plan designs in consultation with local children.</p> <p>We don't have any spaces designed specifically with disability in mind although were we to re-develop Winton playground in Bournemouth (which is close to Linwood School - for children with learning disabilities - many pupils also have physical disabilities) we would put a greater emphasis on inclusive</p>

		equipment, but not to the detriment of enjoyment of the vast majority of local children who still want to experience adventurous and exciting play.
Mid Devon District Council Adrian Cook	I consider it is very important for children to integrate in their play. I have not received any requests for specialist equipment from residents and our members have not commented on our current policy.	I consider the best policy when considering suitable play equipment for less able children is to provide items that can be used by all capabilities. The latest play area installation at Peoples Park in Tiverton includes a large climbing net and a basket swing. Both of these items are accessible to children, who have restricted mobility. A child can be lifted into the basket swing and feel included as opposed to being singled out as a special case. The climbing net allows children to pull themselves up and again be involved with their friends.
Christchurch Borough Council Carina Gallacher	We do not provide exclusive sites for DDA purposes. We have included people with disabilities at design stage when creating a new site and this seems to allow expectation levels to be managed. We have not received any complaints about lack of facilities.	We applied internally to get capital money to make our sites more DDA compliant i.e. easy access into sites etc. and £20k was awarded for 30 sites. Subsequently it was syphoned off for the creation of a new play area which included ramps and handrails. We had started the programme to make sites more compliant but this is on hold now. Most of our sites offer opportunities for people with disabilities from tactile bark and sand surfacing through to group swings and talk tubes. One lady in Christchurch with a 24 year son with severe mental and physical disabilities has commented on the value of the Group Swing.
Play England Jane Hembrow	It's about making sure that the whole space fits its community and "Design for Play" was very good at explaining the benefits of this - about having inclusive resources that	The playground in Exeter is a good demonstration site http://www.theplaypark.co.uk/ . A chat with Miriam Guard will show the highs and lows. As we learnt through the playbuilder programme, access to the site is one of the most important things - not everyone wants to use the equipment, but most want to be

	<p>everyone can use including adults, rather than exclusive bits of kit that many only benefit some.</p> <p>http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/tools-for-evaluating-play-provision.aspx would help with the decision making.</p>	<p>part of what's there.</p> <p>Design for Play Joy Davenport and Chris Patey in Plymouth 01752 307021 who developed their playbuilder programme sites with input from children and young people with varying needs.</p> <p>KIDS would have examples of good practise. http://www.kids.org.uk/information/100428/102566/kids_play_england_partnership/</p> <p>http://www.playengland.org.uk/our-work/places-to-go.aspx</p>
<p>Play England</p> <p>Ashley Rogers Senior Development Officer</p>	<p>From my experience working on Playbuilder / pathfinder with over 15 local authorities and development of over 100 play spaces, the majority of consultations with disabled children and young people focused on 'being' and 'feeling' included. They did not specifically ask for or want specialist play equipment</p>	<p>Disabled children said they wanted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to be able to get to and from (and around) the play space with ease • to have some level of challenge and risk when at the play space • sensory experiences (musical play, wildflower meadows, smells and textures) • places to hang out with their mates and chat • no gates (as they are often difficult to operate for some children with mobility issues) • the opportunity to enjoy some of the play experiences in the play space <p>KIDS have a useful Inclusivity Assessment Tool on their website which may help.</p>