

The NPFA Six Acre Standard

The National Playing Fields Association's recommendations for outdoor playing space, (i.e. for sport, recreation and children's play) are a global statement of the amount of land required per 1,000 head of population and should be regarded as a minimum standard. The NPFA recommends a minimum standard for outdoor playing space of 2.4 hectares per 1000 head of population, made up as follows:

Play Facilities: 0.6 - 0.8 hectares per 1000 population.

- Outdoor equipped playgrounds for children of whatever age;
- Other designated play facilities for children which offer specific opportunity for outdoor play, such as adventure playgrounds;
- Casual or informal playing space within housing areas

Outdoor Sports: 1.6 - 1.8 hectares per 1000 population.

- Facilities such as pitches, greens, courts, athletics tracks and miscellaneous sites such as croquet lawns and training areas owned by local authorities, whether at county, district or parish level;
- Facilities described above within the educational sector and which, as a matter of practice and policy, are available for public use;
- Facilities described above which are within the voluntary, private, industrial and commercial sectors, and serve the leisure needs for outdoor recreation of their members, or the public.

NB: Included within the broad 2.4 hectares standard is a specific allocation of 1.2 hectares (3.0 acres) per 1000 population for pitch sports

Overall Minimum Standard for Outdoor Playing Space: 2.4 hectares per 1000 population.

NPFA Characteristics of Play Areas

LAP – Local Area for Play

- Has a minimum activity zone area of 100 m².
- Caters for children up to 6 years of age.
- Is within 1 minute's walking time from home.
- Has a buffer zone of 5 m minimum depth between the activity zone and the nearest dwelling that faces the LAP. This should include planting to enable children to experience natural scent, colour and texture.
- Is overlooked by nearby houses.

- Gable ends or other exposed walls should be protected from use for ball games by, for example, providing a strip of dense planting of 1 m minimum depth.
- Is positioned beside a pedestrian pathway on a well-used route.
- Occupies a reasonably flat, well-drained site with grass or a hard surface.
- Contains features that enable children to identify the space as their own domain, e.g. low key games such as hopscotch, a footprint trail, mushroom style seating etc.
- Any playground equipment provided must conform to EN 1176.
- Contains seating for parents and/or carers.
- Has fencing of at least 600mm in height around the perimeter, with a self-closing pedestrian gate to prevent access by dogs.
- Has a barrier to limit the speed of a child entering or leaving the facility.
- Has a sign indicating:
 - The area is solely for use by children;
 - Adults are not allowed unless accompanied by children;
 - Dogs are excluded.

LEAP – Local Equipped Area for Play

- Has a minimum activity zone area of 400 m².
- Caters for children from 4 to 8 years of age.
- Is within 5 minutes' walking time from home.
- Has a buffer zone not less than 10 m in depth between the activity zone and the habitable room façade of the dwelling. This zone should include planting to enable children to experience natural scent, colour and texture.
- Should not have play equipment overlooking nearby gardens.
- Is positioned by a pedestrian pathway on a well-used route.
- Occupies a well-drained site with a grass or hard surface and features an appropriate impact absorbing surface beneath and around the play equipment conforming to EN 1177.
- Contains at least 5 types of play equipment, of which at least two are individual pieces, rather than part of a combination multi-play unit. Each type of play equipment should be designed to stimulate one of the following activities:
 - Balancing
 - Rocking

- Climbing/Agility
- Sliding
- Social play

Additional items may focus upon rotating, swinging, jumping, crawling, viewing, counting or touching.

- The playground equipment must conform to EN 1176.
- Contains seating for parents and/or carers.
- Contains a litterbin.
- Has adequate space around the equipment to enable children to express their general exuberance and play games of 'tag' or 'chase'.
- Has fencing of at least 1 m in height around the perimeter of the activity zone, with two outward opening, self closing gates, on opposite sides of the play area, to deter entry by dogs and to restrict opportunities of bullying.
- Has a barrier to limit the speed of a child entering or leaving the facility.
- Has a sign indicating:
 - The area is solely for use by children;
 - Adults are not allowed unless accompanied by children;
 - Dogs are excluded;
 - Name and telephone number of the operator of the facility to report any incident or damage to the play equipment;
 - Location of nearest public telephone.

NEAP – Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area

- Has a minimum activity zone area of 1000 m² that is divided into two parts; one containing a range of playground equipment and the other having a hard surface of at least 465 m² (the minimum area needed to play five-a-side football).
- Caters predominantly for older children.
- Is within 15 minutes' walking time from home.
- Has a buffer zone of not less than 30 m in depth between the activity zone and the boundary of the nearest dwelling. A greater distance maybe needed where purpose built skateboarding facilities are provided. This zone should include planting to enable children to experience natural scent, colour and texture.
- Positioned beside a pedestrian pathway on a well-used route.

- Occupies a well drained site with both grass and hard surfaced areas and featuring an appropriate impact absorbing surface beneath and around the play equipment conforming to EN 1176.
- Contains at least 8 types of play equipment comprising:
 - At least 1 item to stimulate rocking, tough, social or development play among younger children;
 - At least 2 items to facilitate sliding, swinging or moderate climbing;
 - At least 5 items to encourage either more adventurous climbing, single point swinging, balancing, rotating or gliding (e.g. cableway). At least 3 of these items should be individual play items rather than part of a combination multi-play unit.
- The playground equipment must conform to EN 1176.
- Contains seating for parents and/or carers in the vicinity of the play equipment and other seating within the hard surfaced games area.
- Contains litterbins at each access point and in the proximity of each group of seats.
- Has a convenient and secure parking facility for bicycles.
- Has adequate space around the equipment to enable children to express their general exuberance and play and play games of 'tag' or 'chase'.
- Has fencing of at least 1 m in height around the perimeter of the activity zone, with two outward opening, self closing gates on opposite sides of the space, to deter entry by dogs and to restrict opportunities for bullying.
- Has a barrier to limit the speed of a child entering or leaving the facility.
- Has a sign to indicate:
 - The area is solely for use by children;
 - Adults are not allowed in the equipped space unless accompanied by children;
 - Dogs are excluded;
 - Name and telephone number of the operator of the facility to report any incident or damage to the play equipment;
 - Location of nearest public telephone.