

KIDS, Hull – Consulting with families to improving the local park

The local authority had already worked with KIDS, the Parent Forum in Hull, to develop an inclusive Cycling Scheme in a large park. This had proved very successful. The council were now thinking about improving the park to make the play equipment more appropriate for disabled children. They wanted to first consult with families to find out what improvements would be most useful.

The Children's Commissioner approached the Parent Forum to discuss this. A questionnaire was devised and distributed during three family events: a key worker family day out, a key worker family picnic and a dad's group family picnic. The last two events were held in the park in question.

The families enjoyed the days out but also valued the opportunity to have their views sought and make sure the improvements made did improve leisure facilities for families. The consultation helped the local authority understand the needs of children across a range of ages and disabilities. It also helped the Local Authority officer responsible for play to build good working relationships with the dad's group and the families attending

The Parent Forum did not make any recommendations directly regarding suggested improvement although some parents subsequently were able to express their views during consultation events they attended.

The Local Authority officer and the parents were able to explore the access issues in the actual setting. All parties were able to learn from each other's experience and needs.

Children with a wide range of disabilities and ages were represented through the consultation. Some families had more than one child with a disability or other children without disabilities so the needs of the whole family were reflected.