



# LET'S PLAY IN LEEDS!



## ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This booklet provides a snapshot of just a few of the best places and spaces for play in Leeds. We hope that it gives families an idea of places to go during the summer months and beyond.

There is not a 'one size fits all' play space that suits everyone. This booklet is a starting point: We would like to find out more about what current conditions for play are like for children and young people with special needs and disabilities (SEND).

Child Friendly Leeds have 12 wishes formed from the ideas of thousands of young people. They spoke about what they thought would make Leeds a better city for them to play, live and grow up in. Number 2 and Number 12 (below) are particularly important to this booklet.

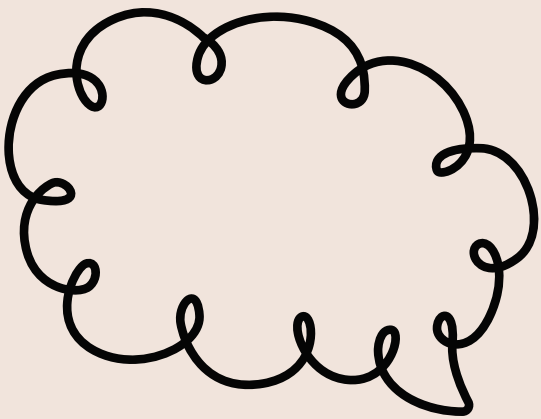


**What is working well and  
needs protecting?**

**How can we share our  
knowledge and experiences  
about safe spaces to play?**



**How can we influence and  
improve new and existing  
provision in our city?**



We would like to hold a space for these conversations and discussions. Please keep an eye out for communications from September onwards – it would be great to have you involved.



## WHAT IS PLAY?

Play encompasses children's behaviour which is self-directed. They have had the freedom to choose how and when they play, without agenda, set goals or reward. It is an innate desire to explore, socialise and have fun. The experts in this – children and young people – have told us that play is:

**'Climbing trees'**

**'Play is where you can  
fill up on joy'**

**'Getting dirty - a mucky  
child is a happy child'**

**'Having a great time  
with your friends'**

## WHY IS PLAY IMPORTANT?

Play is fundamental to the healthy development of a child. It is the framework through which they learn. Through play, they become able to: build and sustain relationships; challenge the limits of their physical selves and environments; problem solve effectively. Most importantly, having sufficient opportunities for play is a key indicator of a happy child: play is pleasure – it contributes to quality of life and sense of well-being. Children and young people told us that play is important because:

**'Play makes life amazing'**

**'You can relax after working so  
hard...time to relax, important  
after the depressing work, gets rid  
of unhappiness'**

**'We can make new friends'**

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

In the following pages, this booklet will take you through some great places to play, relax and socialise in Leeds. The key below highlights some particular features of a place that may help to make this space feel safe, accessible and fun for children and their parents or carers.

## Key



Cafe



Changing Places Toilet



Sensory features (e.g. sand; water; different surface textures; sensory play equipment etc.)



Water (river; lake; ponds etc)



No entrance fee



Accessibility guide/information available



Car park



Disabled parking bays



Boundary/fenced- in or enclosed areas



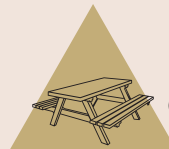
Open space (to run; make noise; burn off energy)



Farm or animal attraction



Outdoor picnic area (where you can eat your own food)



Indoor picnic area (where you can eat your own food)



Option to find quieter spaces to relax



Accessible routes around the site



Provide wheelchairs

*It's important to remember that this is an overview, selecting highlights and key features – not a comprehensive list of all criteria for each space.*

## PLACES IN LEEDS



### Lotherton, Aberford



There's lots on offer at Lotherton: Wildlife World, gardens, meadows, adventure playground and more! Lotherton has a playground specifically for the under 8s, with climbing frames, zipwires and swings – and a woodland play area with twin zip wires and play equipment for older children. On sunny days you can enjoy giant lawn games in the gardens. The deer hide is a quiet and peaceful spot where you can spot herds of red deer. There's also special educational and interactive displays for children, as well as an undercover picnic area.



### Meanwood Park



Meanwood Park is a peaceful and tranquil space where you can feel close to nature. It is a part of the Meanwood Trail (a woodland walk that explores the Meanwood Valley Local Nature Reserve). The main path through the park is suitable for disabled users, but there are several woodland paths with uneven surfaces. The playground is currently being redeveloped. The new design will include sensory features and a focus on biodiversity.





## Temple Newsam



*\*\*Although access to the park and grounds is free, you need to pay to access the house, farm and to park on site*

There are a great range of spaces to explore at Temple Newsam, including Home Farm, a beautiful park and gardens and adventure playground. Inside the historic Temple Newsam House, there are new play bays filled with books, blocks and toys linked to the history of the house. There is a fully accessible playground next to Home Farm, with a fully accessible Changing Places facility nearby. There are uneven areas of gravel and cobbled ground, particularly within Home Farm and the stables courtyard. Although many of the walks and trails are accessible, some can be steep in places.



## Moortown Park



Moortown Park provides open green space, great play equipment and areas of quieter woodland. There is a secure dedicated play area with a sand pit and wide slide (there's also another in the main park) that allow more than one person up/down the slide at one time. There is a flat, paved path that circles around the inner edge of the park. It's worth noting that areas of the park do get extremely muddy during wet weather. Free parking is available on Street Lane, however there are residential parking zones on the other streets surrounding the park.



## Middleton Park



Middleton Park is a fantastic expanse of green space in the south of the city. The park offers bowling greens, a nature reserve, playgrounds, a fishing lake and multi use games areas. Aswell as this, there are nearby attractions such as Middleton Railway, Middleton Park Equestrian Centre and John Charles Centre for Sport. There is an accessible toilet at the visitor centre.

*\*\*The visitor centre, cafe and toilet are open from 10.15am to 2.15pm.*



## Roundhay Park



As well as lakes, woodlands, skateparks and playgrounds, Roundhay Park hosts Tropical World: an indoor wildlife park. There are 5 car parks with three disabled parking bays on Mansion Lane and a larger disabled bay outside Tropical World. Accessible toilets are available in Tropical World Explorers Cafe, the visitor centre, education rooms and Lakeside Cafe. Near the tram car park (off Princes Avenue) there is a playground with accessible play equipment. The Friends of Roundhay Park have designed two trails to follow – one of which is wheelchair accessible. A land train runs Saturdays, Sundays and during school holidays from approx. 11am (weather permitting) starting from the Lakeside Cafe (£1.50 single/£2.00 return).





## Kirkstall Abbey

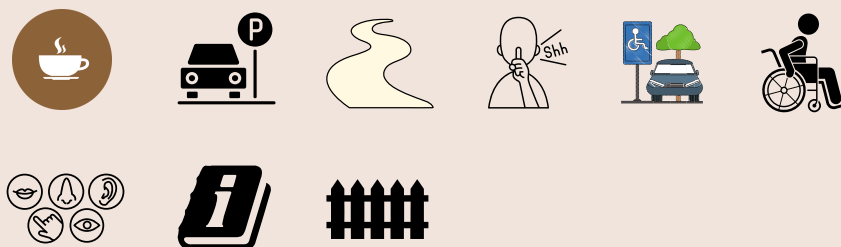


**\*\*Leeds residents are able to visit Kirkstall Abbey (inside the main ruins) for free, on presentation of valid proof of residency**

Kirkstall Abbey is set in open green space alongside areas of quieter woodland along the riverbank. There are lots of fantastic ruins to scramble over and there is an enclosed playground near the car park. The accessible path from the car park is steep, there is an alternative route bypassing Abbey House Museum, which is slightly less sloped. There are accessible toilets in the visitor centre. Please note that Kirkstall Abbey is a heritage site and some areas of the grounds are cobbled and/or uneven. An induction loop is in place at the desk in the visitor centre.



## Kirkstall Abbey Museum



The main entrance does have level access, though the Museum is set back from a steep road when arriving from Kirkstall Abbey on Kirkstall Road. The majority of the galleries (including the Childhood Gallery), the Victorian streets and special exhibition space are fully accessible. Please note that there are cobbled streets and some narrow spaces in the Victorian streets. Throughout the museum, there are plenty of nooks and crannies where children can find quiet and comfortable spaces to play with a selection of toys and books. There are accessible toilets in the main entrance foyer and shop in the Museum. An induction loop is in place in the entrance foyer and shop.

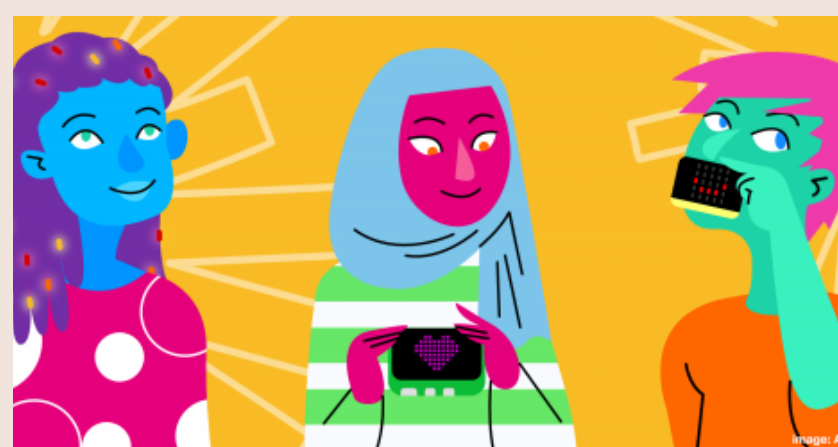
# Leeds Libraries (various locations)

Search [www.leedsinspired.co.uk](http://www.leedsinspired.co.uk) for information about days and times of sessions and to find your nearest library with a Mini Playbox



## Mini Playboxes

Leeds Libraries are wonderful places to play, socialise and relax. Selected libraries have recently introduced Mini Playboxes. Amazing creations packed with fun and engaging self-serve activities for children and families from sensory play, to loose parts play to den-building kits!



## Clubs in Leeds Libraries

At monthly Lego Clubs children build and construct creations based on best-loved children's books, featuring a different theme each month. Suitable for children aged 5+. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Lego Club takes place once a month at different library venues across the city.

At Coding Club you can start your coding adventure with Leeds Libraries! You will discover easy-to-follow projects which will help you to learn a variety of coding languages by making games, robots, animations, and websites in a supportive environment.

Both clubs are popular with children with special needs and disabilities.

# CREATING SPACE FOR PLAY

## Leeds Play Streets



Play streets happen when residents apply to the council to close the streets outside their homes to traffic for a few hours. This allows children to play and neighbours to come together and relax and have fun on their street.

A play street allows children to play freely - all on the safe and open stretch of their own road. Importantly, you provide the time and space for play – and the children have the freedom to choose how they play.



People who live there still have access: the closure simply stops non-residents from driving through, so that residents can use their street as a social space.

**Find out more information by emailing the Play Streets Team:  
[play.streets@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:play.streets@leeds.gov.uk)**