

Westminster City Council

Playground Action Plan

2026 – 2028



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City of Westminster

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Introduction



This Playground Action Plan sets out a whole council approach to delivering high quality, inclusive and equitable play facilities across Westminster. Our ambition is to ensure the borough offers the best possible spaces for children and families to play, grow and stay active.

Play is essential to children's development, helping them explore, imagine, build confidence, and connect with the world. It also supports parents and carers by providing safe, engaging outdoor spaces. Article 31 of the UN convention on the rights of the child recognises every child's right to play, and this principle guides our work.

Westminster has 68 playgrounds, forming part of a wider network of parks, youth clubs, multi use games areas, leisure centres, community hubs and play streets.

Driven by our recent playground audit, this action plan outlines the projects we will deliver over the next two years. It also considers how we will approach all aspects of playground provision, including finance, decision making, maintenance, audit, procurement, planning, and future development, in a coordinated and sustainable way.

The Playground Action Plan in context

We are taking a phased approach to delivering our vision for play in Westminster.

This Playground Action Plan is Phase 1 of that process. It will drive and shape our work to improve playground provision in Westminster over the next 2 years and we're proud to be committing to the schemes and programmes it outlines.

However, we know that play is about more than just playgrounds and there's more we can do to encourage and support play in our city. We want to create more high-quality opportunities for play, in all its forms. That's why in Phase 2 we will be going beyond traditional playgrounds, thinking about various different types of facilities such as Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs), Active Streets and so on.

We also recognise that play facilities are not just for children, we need to consider adults with additional needs and any others who might benefit. It's all about making sure we're making best possible use of all the spaces and assets we've got, to create as much opportunity for play as we can, for everyone.

In Phase 2 we will develop a broader Play Strategy which will build on this Playgrounds Action Plan and look at the bigger picture. This overarching strategy will set out what we intend to do support, encourage and enable all forms of play in Westminster over the next 5 years.



Our vision for play in Westminster

Phase 1:
Playgrounds Action
Plan (2026-28)

Phase 2:
Play Strategy
(2026-31)

Supported and enabled by:

ActiveWestminster Strategy and Delivery Plan

Other related council strategies



Background

The Playground Action Plan is directly informed by the foundations established in the Westminster 2026 asset audit (also known as the Play Facilities Strategy (PFS)) and the Westminster Infrastructure Delivery Plan ([City Plan 2019](#)). By drawing on the insights, data, and strategic direction set out in these documents, the Action Plan ensures that our approach is consistent, transparent, and continuously evolving rather than a standalone initiative.

The Action Plan incorporates key information and priorities identified in the PFS and Infrastructure Delivery Plan, including updated audits, mapping, and community needs assessments. These elements have helped shape our investment priorities, aiming to target resources where they are most needed, whilst embedding learning from previous programmes into our current delivery.

This ongoing process not only strengthens the operational arm of the City Plan ambitions but also ensures that our playground provision is responsive to changing needs and emerging opportunities.

Furthermore, this Action Plan will serve as a bridge to the forthcoming overarching Play Strategy. This will create seamless integration and strategic continuity by building on past achievements and lessons learned, and by maintaining alignment with the City Plan. We are ensuring that our future strategy will be both ambitious and grounded in a proven approach.



Purpose

Purpose of this document

To establish a clear two-year forward plan for playground capital projects, ensuring maintenance costs are identified and funding is aligned across the Council, with a focus on equitable distribution and inclusive play.

What we want to achieve

Our commitment remains to provide children with access to safe, engaging, and inclusive play spaces, demonstrating our determination to deliver on our collective vision for the city's future.

In December 2024, following sustained parliamentary engagement by Play England, Government amended the [NPPF \(National Planning Policy Framework\)](#); to introduce explicit protection for formal play spaces. Subsequent reforms to the [NPPF \(Dec 2025\)](#) and [Design & Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance \(Jan 2026\)](#) broadened the focus to

include play areas and spaces beyond playgrounds, informal and street play, and stronger integration of play into planning, design and placemaking.

Together, these changes strengthen the policy framework for protecting existing provision, securing higher-quality and more inclusive play in new developments, and embedding play in master planning, regeneration and public realm schemes.



Westminster's City Plan Play Sufficiency Statement:

'Major developments will be required to provide new or improved public open space and space for children's active play, particularly in areas of open space or play space deficiency.'

(City Plan 2019-2040 Policy 38)

A cohesive approach

We apply a consistent, council wide approach to playground safety, with visual inspections carried out daily or weekly depending on the site, supported by quarterly physical inspections to ensure timely identification and resolution of issues.





Updated approach

Maintain and audit playgrounds using a consistent, risk-based, and data-driven approach to ensure safety, accessibility, and sustainability. This includes prioritised inspections with digital tools, standardized preventative maintenance, independent evaluations, community input, and sustainable, inclusive design. Council coordination and staff training will support a safe and well-maintained playground network for everyone.

Every child and family in Westminster will have access to safe, high-quality, and inspiring playgrounds that promote health, inclusion, and community connection. We recognise that not all children currently have the same opportunities to play, with inequalities in access and quality across the borough. The mapping has now identified a need for increased playgrounds and more inclusive playground equipment to ensure that as many people as possible can benefit from these spaces.

Playground improvements

2025/26 – 2027/28

Project / playground name	Ward	Overview
Avenues Playground	Queen's Park	The project focuses on updating the playground and play equipment in a currently underutilised playground next door to Queen's Park Library, within the Avenues Estate, as part of the Neighbourhoods Strategy and North Paddington Programme. Date: Implementation September 2026
Pimlico Gardens	Pimlico South	Provide incidental low level accessible and inclusive play equipment to fit into a grade II listed site. Delivery timescales are dependent on the outcome of the Pimlico Gardens transformation works. Date: Project feasibility to commence in 2026/27
Causton Street	Vincent Square	The refurbished Causton Street Play Area will provide an improved, inclusive, play facility for children in the Pimlico area. By offering a wide variety of types of play (including splash play) in a safe environment, it will support healthier communities and promote both physical and mental wellbeing. Date: Project to commence in 2026/27
Lisson Green – Under 5's	Church Street	Lisson Green Playground refurbishment will include looking at expanding the playground, as currently high demand warrants more equipment on site. Date: Project initiation to commence in 2027/28
Lupus Street	Pimlico South	We'll run a play and activity test at Lupus Street Playground to see how the space is used and gather resident feedback. Findings will guide future design, access, safety, and operations. Date: Project to commence April 2026

Project / playground name	Ward	Overview
Mozart – Lawes Playground	Queens Park	Mozart, Lawes Playground will provide an improved, inclusive, play facility for children. By offering a wide variety of types of inclusive play in a safe environment, it will support healthier communities and promote both physical and mental wellbeing. Date: Project initiation to commence in 2027/28
Orange Park Playground	Church Street	Orange Park Playground will provide an improved, inclusive, play facility for children. This project will focus on renovating the entire playground to provide more equipment and activities for inclusive play in. Date: Project initiation to commence in 2027/28
South Area – Churchill Gardens Estate	Pimlico South	Chippendale playground consultation is in its final stages, agreeing on redesigned playground which includes inclusive play. Date: Estimated completion in August 2026
West Area – Hallfield Estate	Lancaster Gate	Exeter Playground. High demand warrants more equipment on site. Therefore the planned refurbishment wants to maximum use of the space to cater for all children. Making it truly inclusive. We are currently in the consultation phase of the project. Date: Consultation to commence in March 2026
Fisherton Estate, Church St	Church Street	Refurbish existing playground for 7-11 age range - about to invite tenders on spec fully consulted upon. Green areas outside the playground will have outdoor gym equipment installed. Date: Procurement to commence April 2026

Playground improvements

2025/26 – 2027/28 (continued...)

Project / playground name	Ward	Overview
Paddington Street Gardens	Marylebone	The refurbished Paddington Street Gardens Play Area will provide an improved, inclusive, play facility for children in the Marylebone area. By offering a wide variety of types of play in a safe environment, it will support healthier communities and promote both physical and mental wellbeing. Date: Consultation to commence March 2026
Porchester Square	Bayswater	The refurbished Porchester Square playground will be an inclusive play space for children in Bayswater. It will offer a wide range of play opportunities in a safe environment, helping to build healthier communities and supporting both physical and mental wellbeing. Date: Detailed design to commence April 2026
Westbourne Green Open Space	Westbourne Green	Improvements to increase accessible, inclusive play equipment within the existing playground - plus new provision for teen girls. Date: Project to commence March 2026
Drury Lane	Drury Lane – St James's	The refurbished Drury Lane Play Area will provide an improved, inclusive, play facility for children in the Covent Garden area, St James Ward. By offering a wide variety of types of play in a safe environment, it will support healthier communities and promote both physical and mental wellbeing. Date: Project commence March 2026

Project / playground name	Ward	Overview
Golden Square (new site)	Soho – West End	New play area at Golden Square will provide a new, accessible, inclusive play facility for all age groups in the Soho Area. By offering a wide variety of types of play in a safe environment, it will support healthier communities and promote both physical and mental wellbeing. Also includes additional greening and biodiversity planning and delivery. Date: Project commence April 2026
St Mary's Churchyard	Paddington Green at Little Venice Ward	As part of the wider improvements to public realm in Paddington Green and Little Venice Canalside, the renewal of St Mary's Playground has come out of the engagement feedback and overall Council commitment as a priority to be delivered. Opportunity to expand and improve facilities for those above 5 years old and make it inclusive for children of all ages and SEND. Subject to Faculty approval from the Church of England, construction is expected to start on site in March 2026 with completion planned by end of 2026.



Overview recommendations of gaps in play



The playground maps in Appendix A show where playgrounds are located in Westminster, and the ages they serve.

This analysis identified two main gaps, areas with limited access to playgrounds and play provision, and existing sites lacking inclusive or accessible equipment. These findings shaped the recommendations by highlighting where improvements or new provision may be needed. A feasibility study will be undertaken to define the requirements in detail and evaluate the viability of delivering the projects in future years.



Overview recommendations of gaps in play (continued...)

Area	Identified gap	Recommendation	Ward
St John's Wood	Gap for toddler / junior playground and informal play	Consider new play provision catering for toddler / junior and informal play, or; Upgrade of Violet Hill Gardens play area to cater for more variable play.	Regents Park / Abbey Wood
Maida Vale	Gap for toddler playground	New provision required	Maida Vale
Bayswater	Gap in toddler / junior playground	New provision required	Bayswater
Edgware Road/ Marylebone Ward	Gap in toddler / junior playground	New provision required	Boundaries of Church Street, Hyde Park and Marylebone Wards
Belgravia	Gap in junior playground	New provision required	Knightbridge and Belgravia
East Marylebone	Gap in junior playground	New provision required	West End / Regents Park
Queen's Park	Inclusive Play	Explore option to enhance Queens Park Gardens, Avenue Gardens, Mozart Lawes, Selby Square with inclusive play	Queen's Park

Area	Identified gap	Recommendation	Ward
St Johns Wood	Inclusive Play	Explore option to enhance St Johns Wood Church Ground, Tollgate Gardens play area, Forty Tree Green Sports Pitch, and/or Paddington Recreation Ground with inclusive play.	Regents Park / Abbey Wood / Maida Vale
North of Mayfair	Inclusive Play	New provision / site required	West End
Edgware Road	Inclusive Play	New provision / site required	Boundaries of Church Street, Hyde Park and Marylebone Wards
Pimlico	Inclusive Play	Explore option to enhance Former Churchill Primary School, Churchill Gardens and/or St Georges Square Gardens with inclusive play.	Pimlico South
Milbank	Inclusive Play	Explore option to enhance Page Street Under 4s Playground, Millbank Gardens, Causton Street Playground, New Trinity Mews Gardens and / or Grosvenor Playground with inclusive play	St James's / Vincent Square / Pimlico North

Overview recommendations of gaps in play (continued...)

We will examine the feasibility of play-space gaps and outline the guiding principles across design, finance, procurement, maintenance, audit, planning, and development.

Design Position: Adopt a whole-council approach prioritising durable materials, inclusive play, and safety, embedding crime prevention principles. Key considerations include:

- Open-age accessibility tailored to site context.
- Balancing consistency and diversity of equipment for efficiency and local character.
- Planning for future demographics to meet long-term demand.
- Encouraging partnerships (e.g. LEGO, schools) for engagement and sponsorship.
- Including shelter, child-friendly signage, and wayfinding for comfort and accessibility.
- Communication boards will feature in all our playgrounds to ensure everyone, regardless of age or ability, can engage and express themselves. We're committed to inclusive play for all.





Finance approach

Unless they are securely and sustainably funded, our plans for playgrounds may not be successfully delivered on the ground. That's why we're establishing a coordinated approach to playground funding across all teams. Key features of this will be:

- **Aligning uplifts at the point of contract renewal**, to ensure we're getting the greatest value for money possible from our commissioning arrangements.
- **Coordinating the use of all funding streams**, including Section 106 funding, Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy, and other external funding, to maximise resources.

This will enable us to support long-term maintenance planning and reduce borrowing costs, leaving us better equipped to respond to the constraints to capital funding that we know we are facing.

Procurement approach

Alongside aligned finance, we need a coordinated approach to contracting and commissioning to ensure we operate as efficiently as possible. Historically, we have replaced spare or outdated playground equipment on a like for like basis to maintain operational consistency and safety, using the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) framework to secure compliant, cost effective, and timely procurement.

However, we believe we can be more ambitious. Over the lifetime of this Action Plan, we intend to move towards:

- **More inclusive and accessible play equipment** in all new projects and refurbishments, making inclusivity a core design principle where possible.
- **Aligning future procurements with wider council strategies**, so that we're in a better position to make impactful improvements as contracts renew.
- **Better use of framework agreements and market engagement** to encourage innovation, social value, and sustainability.
- **Using the relet of the council's parks ground maintenance contract** as a chance to review and enhance playground management and maintenance regimes for the longer term.



Governance approach

As previously outlined, whole-council coordination and cooperation will underpin successful delivery of this Playground Action Plan. This will rest on clear processes and good governance. Key elements of this will be:

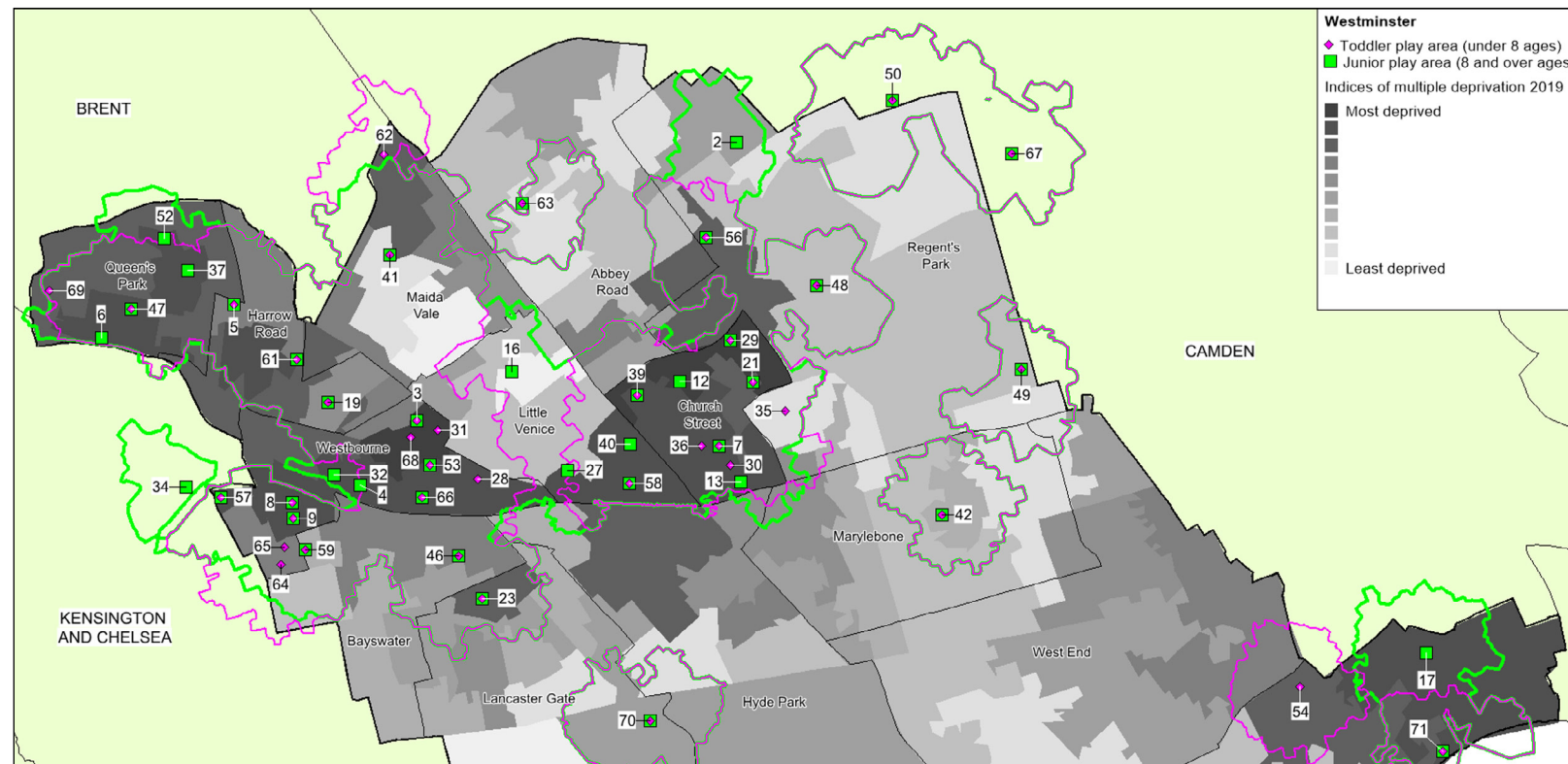
- **Regular reporting:** Within the council we will maintain a regular cycle of quarterly, cross-departmental reporting on playground provision and projects. These updates will ensure full visibility of ongoing and upcoming playground improvements across the borough.
- **Strategic decision making:** All new playground projects will be reviewed by the Playground Board to ensure they meet standards for inclusivity, accessibility, and evidence-based decision-making. Wherever possible, projects will be co-designed with local communities and aligned with the Council's Playground Policy.
- **High quality information:** An up-to-date asset register and comprehensive condition surveys will be maintained to guide investment priorities and inform long-term maintenance planning.
- **Strengthened relationship between policy and operations:** Ensuring that all schemes align with our city development policies and priorities, leading to accessible, high-quality play spaces that reflect community needs and support long-term sustainability.



Appendix A: Playground map

Toddler and junior play sites with walk time catchments on IMD (Map ID labels)

North of Westminster



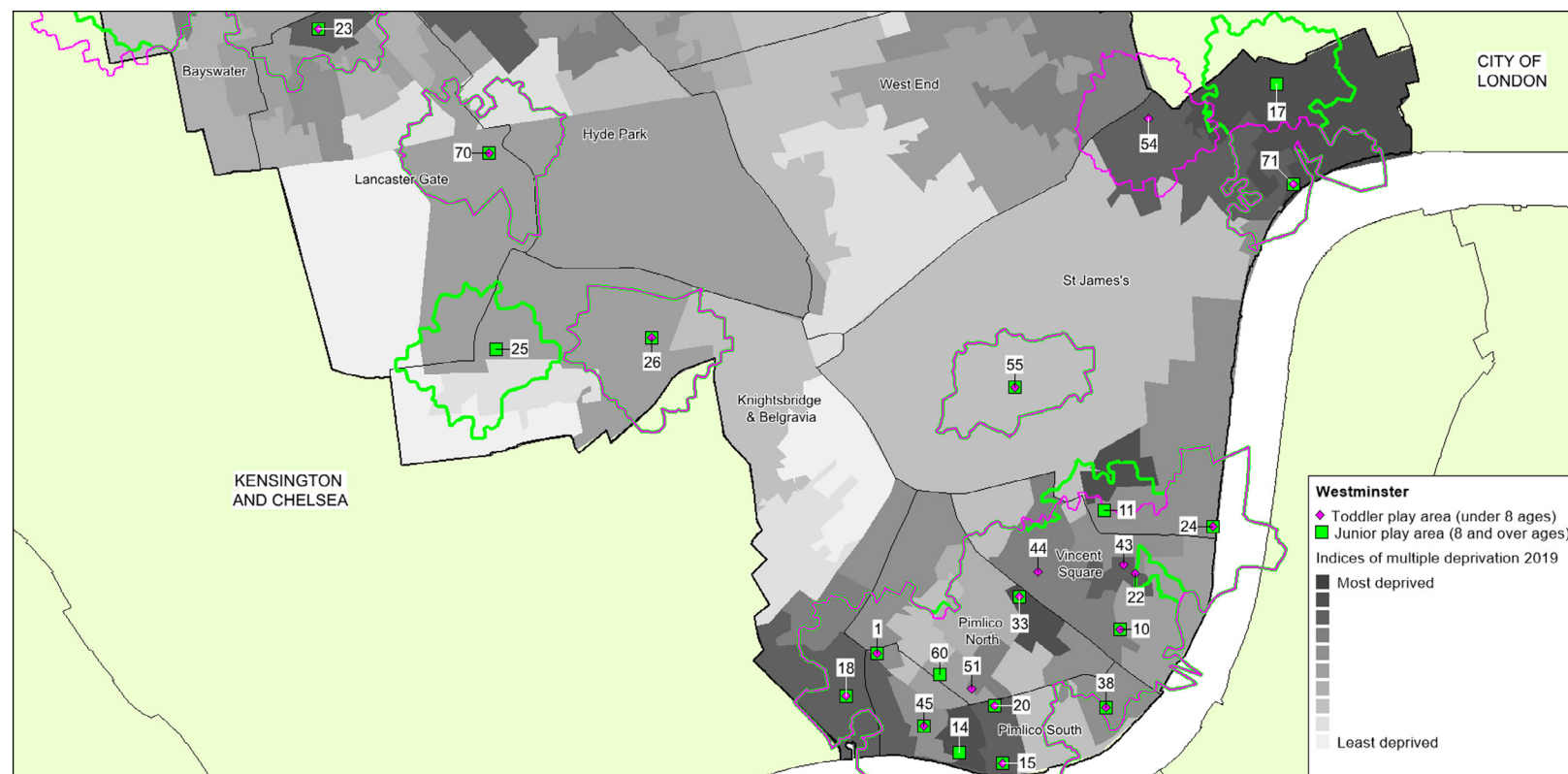
Map ID

- 1 Abbots Manor Playground
- 2 Adventure Play Hub
- 3 Aldsworth Close Playground
- 4 Alfred Road Playground
- 5 Ashmore Road play area
- 6 Avenue Gardens play area
- 7 Broadley Street Gardens play area
- 8 Brunel play area 1
- 9 Brunel play area 2
- 10 Causton Street Playground
- 11 Channel 4 Community Gardens play area
- 12 Church Street Fisherton play area
- 13 Church Street Sheringham play area
- 14 Churchill Gardens Junior Playground
- 15 Churchill Gardens play area
- 16 Crescent Garden play area
- 17 Drury Lane Gardens play area
- 18 Ebury Bridge play area
- 19 Edbrooke Road play area
- 20 Former Churchill PS Playground
- 21 Greenside Community Centre
- 22 Grosvenor Playground, Vincent St
- 23 Hallfield Playground
- 24 Victoria Tower Gardens Playground
- 25 Hyde Park (Seniors Playground) play area
- 26 Hyde Park (South Carriage Drive Playground)
- 27 John Aird Court play area
- 28 Lapworth Court play area
- 29 Lisson Green Football and Basketball Pitches
- 30 Lisson Street play area
- 31 Little Venice Barnwood under 5s play area
- 32 Little Venice Brindley play area
- 33 Longmore Gardens Playground
- 34 Malvern Close Gardens play area*
- 35 Marylebone Lascelles House play area
- 36 Medway House Pitch
- 37 Mozart Lawes play area
- 38 New Trinity Mews Gardens

- 39 Orange Park play area
- 40 Paddington Green Adpar Street play area
- 41 Paddington Recreation Ground play area
- 42 Paddington Street Gardens play area
- 43 Page Street Under 4s Playground
- 44 Vincent Square
- 45 Paxton Terrace North Playground
- 46 Porchester Square Gardens play area
- 47 Queens Park Gardens play area
- 48 Regents Park (Hanover Gate) play area
- 49 Regents Park (Marylebone Green) play area
- 50 Regents Park (Primrose Hill)*
- 51 Russel House play area
- 52 Selby Square Playground
- 53 Senior Street play area
- 54 Soho Vale Royal play area
- 55 St James Park (Wellington Barracks Playground)
- 56 St John's Wood Church Grounds play area
- 57 Tavistock Play Area
- 58 St Mary's Churchyard play area
- 59 St Stephens Gardens play area
- 60 Sussex Street play area
- 61 Tamplin Mews Gardens play area
- 62 Tollgate Gardens play area
- 63 Violet Hill Gardens play area
- 64 Wessex Gardens Estate, Anglebury Gardens play area
- 65 Wessex Gardens play area
- 66 Westbourne Green Open Space play area
- 67 Regent's Park – Gloucester Gate Playground*
- 68 300 Harrow Rd play area
- 69 Queens Park Court Play Area
- 70 Kensington Gardens – Buckhill Playground
- 71 Victoria Embankment Gardens playground

* Outside Westminster

South of Westminster



For further information:

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