

Improving Access, Creating Excitement at Northgate Recreation Ground



NORTHGATE PLAYING FIELDS & YOUTH AREA

Client: Crawley Borough Council

Address: Woodfield Road,
Northgate, Crawley,
RH10 8AA

Budget: £150,000

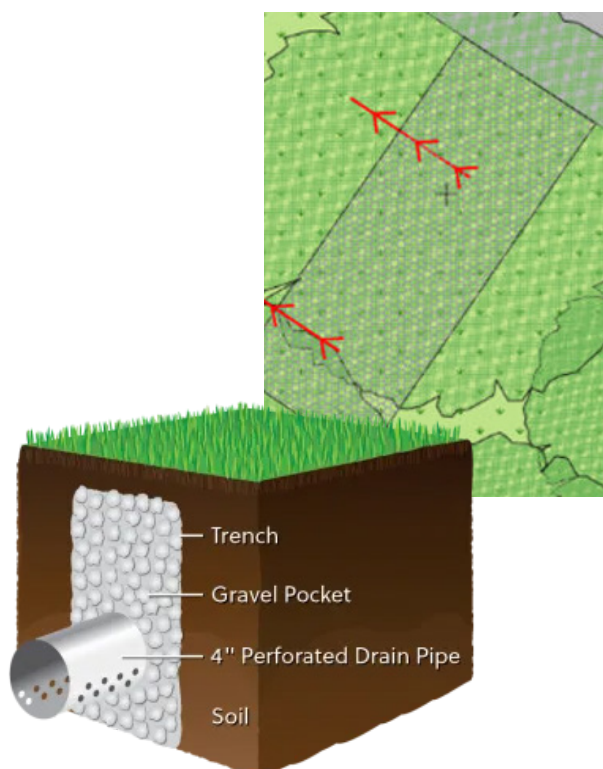
Age Range: Toddlers, Juniors, Teens

Ranges: Diabolo

Surfacing: Wetpour

In 2025, Crawley Borough Council awarded Proludic a multi-site tender worth half a million pounds to transform five play spaces across the borough. Northgate Recreation Ground was the largest site within the programme and required a particularly creative response. The existing playground was in poor condition, with equipment reaching the end of its lifespan and the facilities no longer able to cope with the volume of visitors.

Used by families, dog walkers, footballers and visitors to a nearby dance studio, the site had become heavily worn along key routes. It was also prone to waterlogging, so improving drainage and access was essential. Proludic introduced French drains, a continuous raised wetpour pad and drilled drainage holes into hardstanding areas to help futureproof the play area and create a more reliable, all-weather environment.





This project required collaborative work on the design with Council officers. This design work was carried out over Teams calls with Proludic's Senior Area Manager and Landscape Architect JP Seymour, and adjustments were made to equipment selection and surfacing types to ensure the final design reflected their needs and preferences.

As part of Proludic's social value commitment, an electric guitar was donated to a local youth club, carbon from the delivery phase was offset, and 369m² of Nike Grind surfacing was installed, helping save thousands of shoes from landfill.



The Council was keen for each playground to have its own identity. At Northgate, the leafy setting inspired a woodland animal's theme, brought to life through green powder-coated Kanopé swings, a woodland creature multi-springer and bespoke play panels referencing local flora and fauna. Through the design development process, a clear preference for slides was identified, leading to the inclusion of four slides for different ages and abilities, from a toddler slide to a 1.77m slide for older children.

The completed play area brings energy, imagination and inclusive play to every corner of the site, providing capacity for more than 80 users and over 100 play values. Older children can speed down the Cableway, test their balance on the Double Perch or explore the accessible Diabolo multiplay unit. For younger visitors, the toddler area offers a gentler woodland adventure, with sensory panels, playful mirrors, themed features, swings and seesaw play designed to spark curiosity and confidence.



“ The Northgate Play and Youth Areas have been transformed into more inclusive and accessible spaces for local families and young people. One of the most significant improvements is the new wetpour surfacing within the youth area, which provides a safer, all-weather surface and allows the space to be enjoyed throughout the year. Combined with the new play equipment, improved drainage and enhanced accessibility, the site now offers a welcoming environment for children and young people of all ages. ”

Alan Tanaka-Heaton -
Crawley Wellbeing Manager