



SkateboardGB

2025 UK Skateable Spaces Audit

BETONGPARK

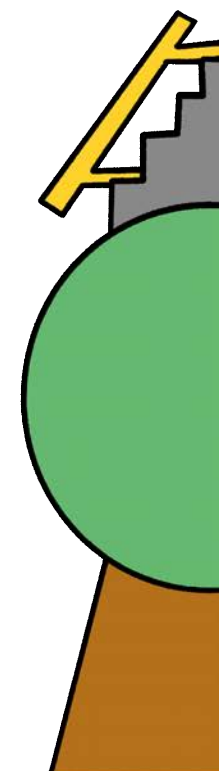


Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



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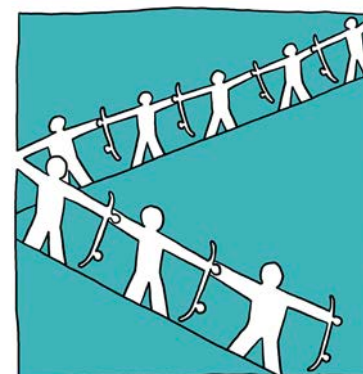
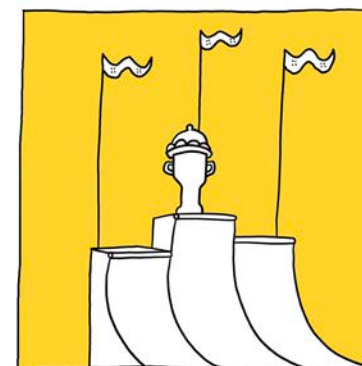
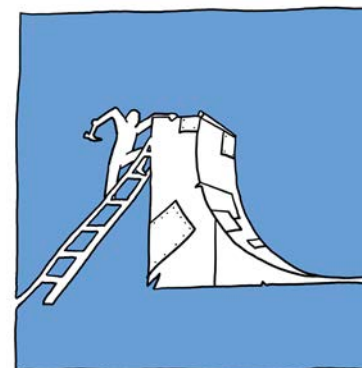
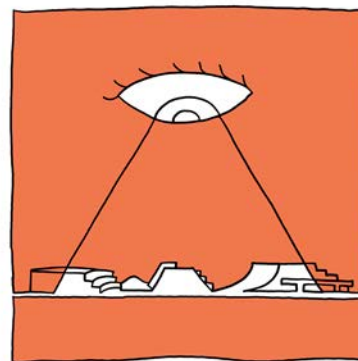


1. INTRODUCTION



In 2024, Skateboard GB, identified a need to understand more about the provision of skateable spaces in the UK. This was to better develop an insight-led 'Skateable Spaces Strategy' in 2025/2026, with the intention of influencing future national and local investment in skateable spaces in the UK. This project was initiated to carry out an audit of the UK's estate of skateable spaces.

'Skateable spaces' can be formal (purpose-built) indoor or outdoor skateparks, deliberately 'skate friendly' public realm developments or augmented spaces, 'meanwhile' or temporary spaces (including vacant shops or indoor car parks), 'DIY' or skater-built spaces (which can be formal/permitted or informal); or the wide-range of informally used spaces, from public plazas and market squares to car parks and high-streets. In 2024, Skateboard GB estimated that there were more than 1,700 public outdoor skateparks in the UK (the majority of which are owned by Local Government) and c.75 indoor skateparks (the majority of which are privately operated, either commercially or by constituted not-for-profit organisations). The overall number of 'DIY' skater-built spaces and frequently but informally used public spaces was unknown. In this project Goldsmiths and Betongpark worked with SBGB Skateable Spaces Development Officer to audit all 'skateable spaces' in the UK, create a database and present the findings in a report.



1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following report presents findings of a national audit of skateable spaces across the United Kingdom, undertaken in 2025 by Goldsmiths, University of London and Betongpark. The research was commissioned by Skateboard GB and funded by Sport England. Research undertaken responds to the need for a comprehensive, evidence-informed understanding of skateable space provision to support the development of a national Skateable Spaces Strategy by Skateboard GB.

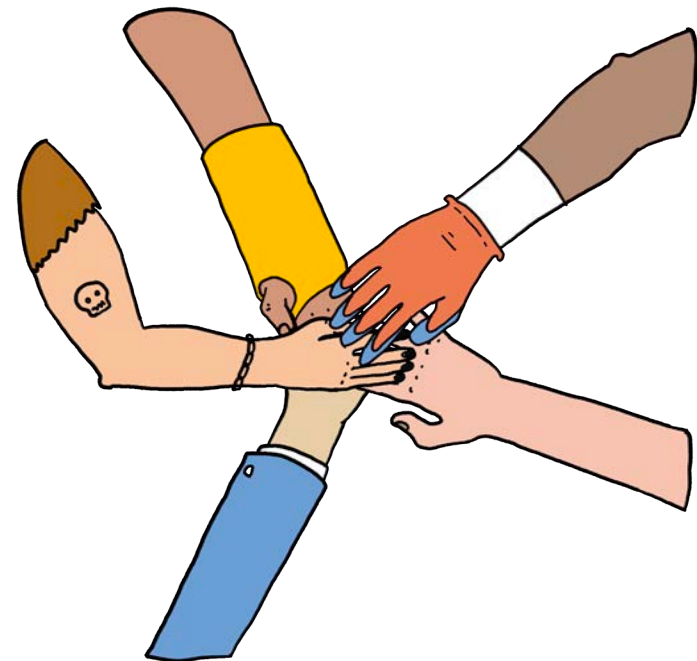
The audit combines a large-scale dataset with qualitative insight from regional stakeholders to capture both the physical characteristics of skateable spaces and the social dynamics that shape their use. A total of 2,090 skateable spaces were identified, of which 1,923 were confirmed as open at the time of analysis. These include purpose-built outdoor and indoor skateparks, DIY spaces and substantial informal spots. The dataset represents the most complete national picture currently available, while acknowledging the inherent challenges of capturing a landscape that is both dynamic and partially informal.

A mixed-methods approach underpins the analysis. Quantitative survey data, collected by 12 regional associates, provides standardised measures across key themes including condition, usability, safety and community presence. This is complemented by qualitative interview data and free-text survey responses, enabling a more detailed understanding of how skateable spaces function in practice. A composite quality index has been developed to support comparison across regions and to identify patterns within the dataset.

The report is structured around eleven thematic areas, reflecting the core dimensions of skateable space provision: overall numbers, regional distribution, alignment with Sport England priority areas, progression and performance pathways, patterns of usage, physical condition, community relationships, safety, inclusivity, organised activity, and provision for beginners. Each section draws together quantitative trends and qualitative insights to provide a grounded account of current provision.

Across the dataset, several cross-cutting dynamics are evident. The quality and usability of spaces are shaped by an interaction between design, materials and maintenance, alongside social factors such as community engagement and organised activity. The presence of active user groups, in particular, emerges as a consistent feature of well-functioning spaces. At the same time, regional variation and differences in infrastructure type highlight the uneven nature of provision across the UK.

This report provides an empirical foundation for future strategic planning. It is intended to support national and local stakeholders in making informed decisions about investment, design and governance, and to contribute to a more coherent and equitable approach to the development of skateable spaces in the UK.



1.2 PROJECT TEAM INTRODUCTION

Dr Esther Sayers is Senior Lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her research focuses on learning and participation in the arts, culture and sport with a particular focus on equity and inclusion. Using qualitative methods - auto ethnography, practice and ethnographic study - to conduct research within communities, institutions and local authorities. Esther supports cultural organisations with CPD research methods training, has led training programmes and conducted research for Wellcome, Southbank Centre, Camden Arts Centre, CHASE and Tate. Research funded by Cambridge University in 2016 explored engagement in urban renewal with a building development programme in Northwest Cambridge. Since 2018 she has been co-founder and research lead for City Mill Skate, a research project using participatory design to create community designed skate dots at City Mill Pool Street on London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, funded by UCL. In 2021 she conducted research into skateboard coaching for Skateboard GB.

Stuart Maclure is Development Manager at Betongpark, a design and construction company specialising in concrete skateparks and other skateable spaces. Betongpark have experience delivering some of the UK's most complex skatepark construction projects such as the restoration of Stockwell skatepark. He is also Director of Community Interest Company Long Live Southbank, working to protect and celebrate the UK's longest continually used skate space, the iconic Southbank Undercroft. He is co-founder of Pushing Borders, an international conference exploring topics across skateboarding, which connect practitioners, academics and activists globally.

Before joining Betongpark, Stuart gained professional experience working as a strategic consultant to a range of private and public sector bodies including the Mayor of London's office, London Legacy Development Committee, the Mayor of West Midlands and the Mayor of San Francisco. Stuart holds a Geography degree from the University of Leeds, studied architecture at the University of Copenhagen and has previous professional experience handling datasets in researching voter habits and ballot propositions. Stuart has been assisted by the Betongpark team including UK skatepark expert Daryl Nobbs and civil engineer Nicolas Gordon.

George Nicholls is Lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London. He worked in primary and secondary education for several years before becoming a Lecturer in Education in 2020. He teaches science and music on the Primary PGCE programme and physics on the Secondary PGCE programme. His research at Goldsmiths focuses on the relationship between motivation, education and subcultures, particularly skateboarding, most recently through work with a school in Malmö, Sweden.

George's academic background is in physics. He completed an MSc in Physics at Cardiff University, specialising in general relativity, with a focus on computing and data handling within his research project. He is also a musician and has performed in several critically acclaimed bands. George has extensive experience of data handling on large-scale projects through both his postgraduate research and his work in physics education. He also brings site-specific research experience from his work at Bryggeriet Gymnasium in Malmö. He is an active skateboarder and part of the 'Deppy' skate community in South London. Within this project, he led the data handling and analysis, contributing to the collation, presentation and development of the dataset.

Regional Skate Associates:

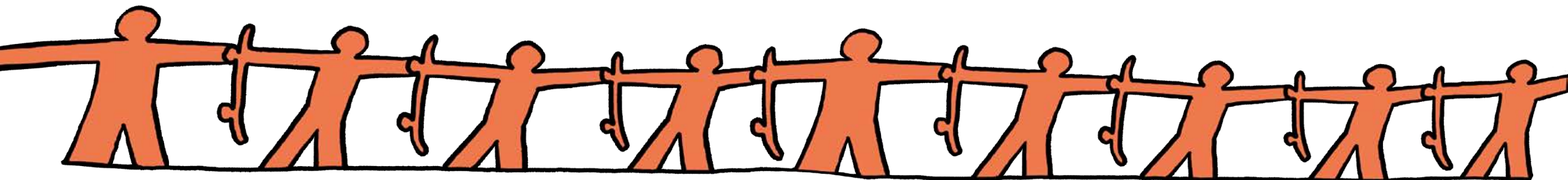
Central to the report has been the commitment, knowledge and passion of a team of UK wide skate associates. Each associate possesses an in-depth knowledge of their respective region, as well as experience working in skateboarding: including non-profit, academic, or industry related.

- Scotland – Rick Curran- Skateboard Scotland
- Northeast – Dave Apomah – Shred The North
- Yorkshire and Humberside – Farran Golding – Skate Bylines
- Northern Ireland – Mark Lilley – Skateboard Northern Ireland
- Wales – Michael Ridot – Cardiff Skateboard Club
- Northwest – Zakaria Rostami – Independent
- West Midlands – Berni Good - Birmingham Skate Spaces CIC
- East Midlands – Tom Quigley – Skate Nottingham CIC
- East of England – Tom Lock – East London Skate Club
- London – Rachael Sherlock and Aurore Rousell – Keep Rolling Co.
- Southeast – Emily Jones- We Skate Soton
- Southwest – Brett Dye – The Skateboarding Show

The authors of the report would like to extend our gratitude to the team, without whom, this research would not have been possible.

Illustration and Design:

Rufus Shakespeare is an artist and educator based between Mexico City and London whose work focuses on participatory co-design as well as community art and engagement. His practice brings in illustrative elements to better communicate information that relates to urban design and planning. Rufus is a lifelong skater whose recent work has involved delivering collective animation workshops for an orphanage in Mexico City.



1.3 BACKGROUND

A physical space to skate is the fundamental need of skateboarding. Although the situation has significantly improved in the last 5-10 years, there are still vast gaps in the quality of public skateparks in the UK, especially compared to standards in North America and Northern Europe, whilst regional variations have widened. Assumptions in 2024 were that the Northeast and West Midlands (and major cities including Manchester and Birmingham) were comparatively under-served in terms of quality skatepark provision, whilst large numbers of excellent skateparks have been developed across the South of England.

1.4 RESEARCH AIMS

- **To understand more about the provision of skateable spaces in the UK to support Skateboard GB in developing an insight-led ‘Skateable Spaces Strategy’ in 2025/2026, with the intention of influencing future national and local investment in skateable spaces in the UK.**
- **To work collaboratively between Goldsmiths, Betongpark and Regional Skate Associates to audit the UK’s estate of skateable spaces.**
- **To work with the SBGB Skateable Spaces Development Officer and present the findings in a report.**
- **To collect and provide data that can be utilised by local government and other stakeholders to develop a higher quality of skateable space across the UK, and to improve end user experience**

1.5 RESEARCH METHODS – OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

The following process was adopted towards the collection and analysis of data. We organised data collection regionally and contracted a Skate Associate with local knowledge to gather data for each region.

DATA COLLECTION:

Secondary material from the database compiled by The Skateparks Project, a voluntary initiative that started mapping UK skateparks in 2015. **Primary data collection:**

- 1.1. Quantitative:** Surveys by 12 regional stakeholders including 35 questions, reflecting the 11 research areas. The surveys were accompanied by detailed guidance (see Appendix 1).
- 1.2. Qualitative:** Interviews with Skate Associates (in person, where possible). The interviews were semi-structured, establishing an overview.

ANALYSIS OF DATA:

The research model had multiple stages for cross-checking data against the combined knowledges of the research team, the Betongpark team and the Regional Associates. This included:

- Cleaning and coding of interview transcripts
- Cleaning and coding of survey data
- Creation of quality index to support research aims

The research varied in method and depth for the different categories of data (e.g. primary data collection from existing skateparks; secondary data collection from existing databases).

A significant proportion of analysis from data collection, interpretation and validation

of findings took place through dialogue within the project team using the combined expertise and experience of their roles as skatepark operators, regional/local community organisations, skatepark design/construction companies, educators and academics. Members of the project team drew on expert knowledge of both the design and construction of skateable spaces, as well as the role that local communities and local governments have in shaping these facilities. The project team utilised their skillset to carry out both in-depth quantitative and qualitative data analysis, drawing on research methods in both statistics and the social sciences.

Our approach and project plan was shared with Skateboard GB (see appendix 2 and included in the application for ethical approval. Ethical approval granted by Research Ethics Sub-Committee, Goldsmiths, University of London on 11 November 2024 Application ID 568628.

1.6 BUILDING A DATABASE FROM THE SKATEPARK PROJECT

An existing database of UK skateable spaces, The Skateparks Project, launched in 2015, served as the foundation for the new database created for this project. To expand this dataset, Skate Associates completed surveys to update the status of existing spaces in 2025 (for example open or closed. Skate Associates then completed further surveys for parks not included in the original dataset in order to build as complete a picture as possible of skateboarding provision in 2025.

The surveys comprised 35 questions covering both the physical properties of skateable spaces (for example condition and maintenance and social aspects (for example safety and the presence of user groups. A complete version of the survey and accompanying guidance is provided in the Appendices. Most questions used Likert scales to provide a consistent and current indication of the audit themes, outlined in the data analysis section. Skate Associates were also invited to provide extended written responses to explain scoring decisions. Both numerical and qualitative data were subsequently used to inform interview questions.

1.7 DATA ANALYSIS

KEY AREAS OF RESEARCH

From the brief for reporting provided by Skateboard GB eleven key areas of research were established:

- **Number of skateable spaces in the UK**
- **Regional spread**
- **Sport England Priority Areas**
- **Progression and alignment with international performance interests**
- **Summary of usage**
- **Health and condition**
- **Meaningful connections between space and community**
- **Factors affecting safety**
- **Factors affecting how welcoming a space feels**
- **Presence of organised skateboarding**
- **Spaces that align with the interests of beginners**

From this, a thematic coding system was developed to analyse the interview transcriptions and to direct the analysis of survey data. Key findings were identified against each theme. To provide a thematic summary of the skateable spaces in relation to the survey data, a composite overall quality index was developed to support analysis. The overall quality index comprised of a normalised average of the scores provided in the surveys against the following 12 indicators, to reflect the above themes:

- **Presence of skateboarding/skateboarders at the site,**
- **Suitability for progression,**
- **Usability,**
- **Condition,**
- **Litter,**
- **Sealing/painting maintenance,**
- **Crack repair,**
- **Structural repair,**
- **Users' happiness (with the space),**
- **How welcoming users perceive the space to be,**
- **Users' sense of safety; and**
- **To what extent events/lessons/etc raise the profile of the space.**

The quality index for each park is the average of all available indicators, expressed as a score out of 100. Where data was incomplete, the score was calculated using only available data. A confidence score (0–12) records how many indicators contributed to each park's score and is used to filter analysis. Regional summaries and correlation analyses use consistent filters: parks must be open and, where appropriate, confidence ≥ 6 . Correlations are exploratory and identify patterns rather than causal relationships.

In section 7, a Pearson correlation test was conducted, testing the overall quality index against: presence of user group, priority area status, material composition, event attendance and frequency, numbers of skateable obstacles, and the presence of non-skate features. Correlation strengths were interpreted with a basis in Cohen's¹ guidelines, splitting 'medium' into modest and moderate, where below 0.2 was considered weak, 0.2-0.39 modest, 0.4-0.59 moderate and 0.6 or above as strong. In cases where no response was recorded for yes/no variables such as user group presence, missing values were treated as indicating absence. Given that organised user groups at skateparks are relatively uncommon and typically well known to regular users, it was assumed that Skate Associates would be aware of their presence where they existed. As a result, positive (yes) responses were treated

as more informative than blank entries and hence blank entries were treated to mean 'no'.

The project was undertaken at Goldsmiths, University of London, Betongpark HQ, Hackney, London and in the public realm at skate spaces nationally.

1.8 LIMITATIONS

From the outset it was acknowledged by the project team and the commissioning body (SBGB) that the scope of this research was too great for the budget. As such, a decision was taken to produce a snapshot, an impression of the current status of the estate of UK skateable spaces rather than a full set of unequivocal facts. While considerable effort was made to verify and cross-check the dataset, the scale of the audit and the integration of multiple data sources means that minor inconsistencies may remain. The figures should therefore be interpreted as the best available estimates at the time of analysis.

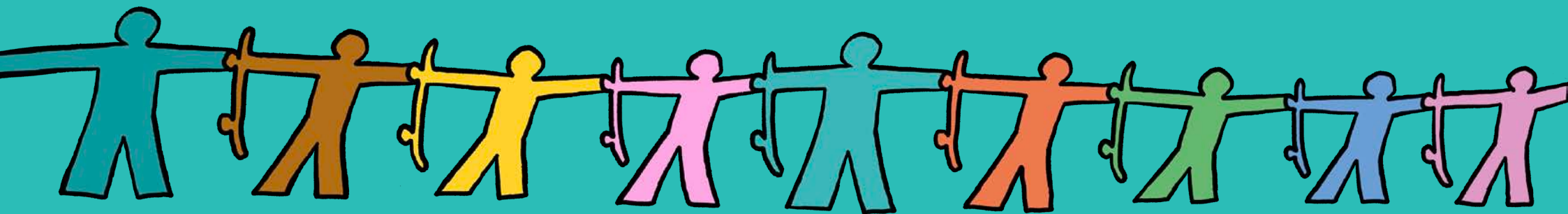
The research process and guidelines for skate associates were designed to minimise the effect of the potential for misinterpretation. The survey gives scope for a range of answers, and some answers required a subjective response. We have aimed to mitigate the effect of this by the creation of indices and comparing regions against UK average.

We acknowledge that substantial street spots and DIYs were also a point of contestation in the data collection, with subjectivity across regional stakeholders as to their definition as well as lack of knowledge of their existence. It is noted that some DIYs did not wish to be included in the survey. Data on formal skateparks (both indoor and outdoor) has been the core consideration of the research and reflects the most accurate data set.

Additional data was gathered by Betongpark to provide a more accurate number of DIYs and substantial spots (included in Fig. 1). This total comprises 34 DIYs and 26 substantial spots. These additional spaces are included in the overall count of spaces but not all are included in the statistical analysis later in the report.

1 Cohen, J. (1988). Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203771587>

2. NUMBER OF SKATEABLE SPACES



2.1 APPROACH

The first task in counting the number of skateable spaces in the UK in 2025 was in ascertaining which spaces were open to the public and which had closed or been dismantled. Closed spaces were marked and discounted from further investigation. Open parks were categorised in terms of the four typologies and noted as free to use or entry fee required.

2.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In 2025, the UK has 2090 skateable spaces. 1923 of these were found to be open and 167 were found to be closed.

Of the 1923 open parks, 1841 of these are outdoor, and 82 are indoor. These were then categorised across 4 typologies: 'purpose built', 'purpose built with DIY features added', 'DIY', and 'substantial spot'. Fig. 2 shows the regional breakdown across typologies. Note that the totals for indoor/outdoor and each typology only include open spaces.

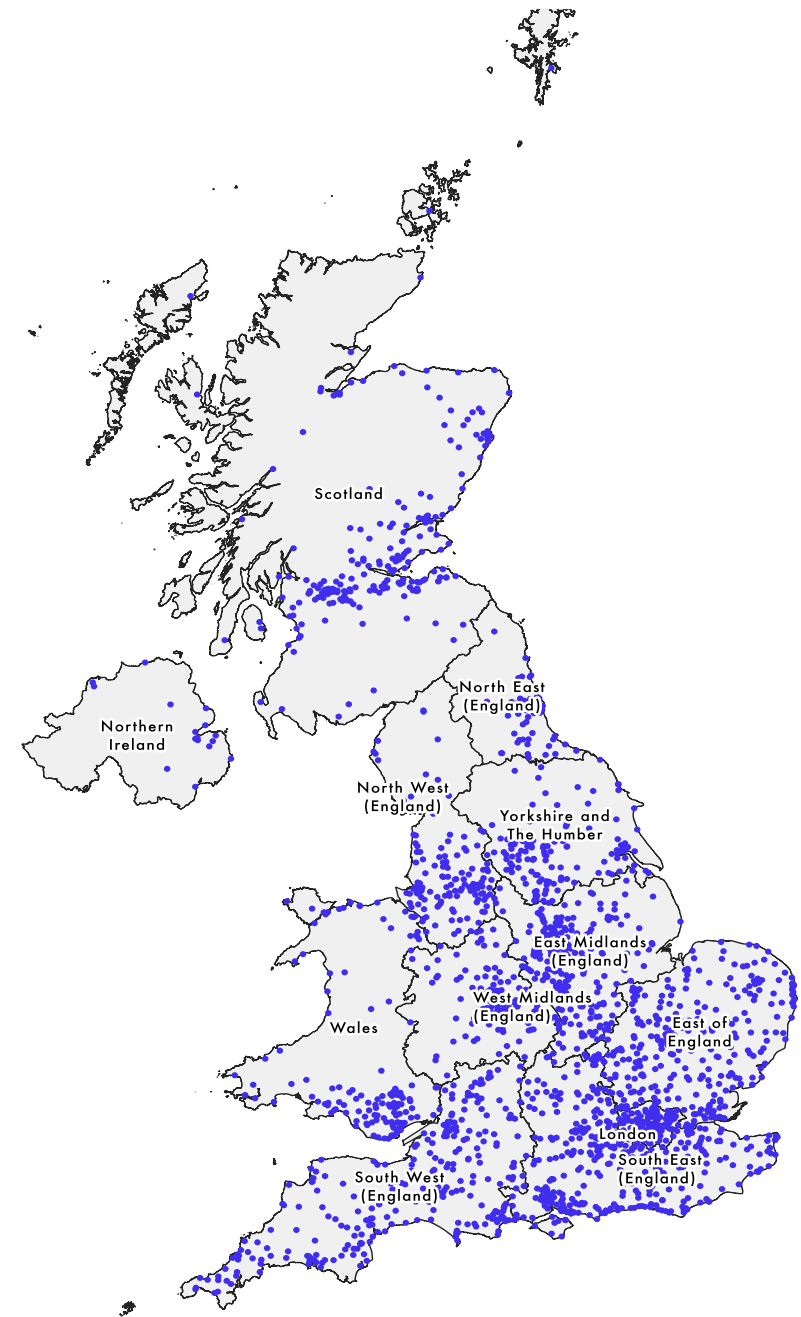


Fig. 1: A map showing the location of all surveyed skateable spaces across the UK.

Fig. 2: A table showing the breakdown of the total number of Skateable Spaces in the UK, 2025.

Region	Open parks	Closed parks	Regional total	Indoor	Outdoor	Purpose Built	DIY	Purpose built with DIY	Substantial Spot
South East	267	29	296	10	257	264	1	2	2
South West	261	13	274	12	249	258	4	0	1
East of England	292	24	316	9	283	283	5	3	2
Scotland	199	10	209	10	189	196	4	0	2
Greater London	147	17	164	7	140	136	6	3	5
East Midlands	161	13	174	3	158	154	4	1	1
Yorkshire and the Humber	123	15	138	6	117	113	3	5	6
West Midlands	137	8	145	4	133	132	2	3	2
Wales	119	16	135	3	116	116	2	2	1
North West	124	12	136	13	111	121	3	1	5
North East	54	6	60	2	52	53	1	1	0
Northern Ireland	12	4	16	3	9	11	1	0	2
NATIONAL TOTAL	1923	167	2090	82	1841	1837	36	21	29

3. REGIONAL SPREAD



3.1 APPROACH

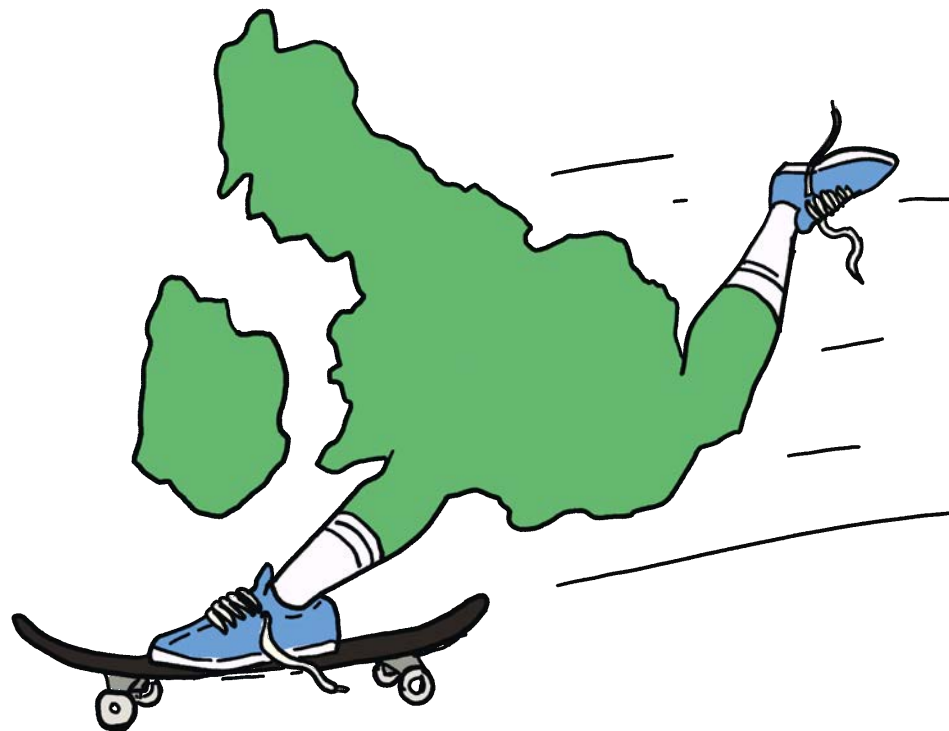
We divided the UK into the 12 regions and contracted an associate researcher for each region. We referred to the 'Postcode prefix to region conversion table' to separate The Skateparks Project's database entries into regional lists. Research associates checked each postcode against skateable spaces in the region and answered survey questions for each. They added additional entries where spaces were discovered that were not on the original list.

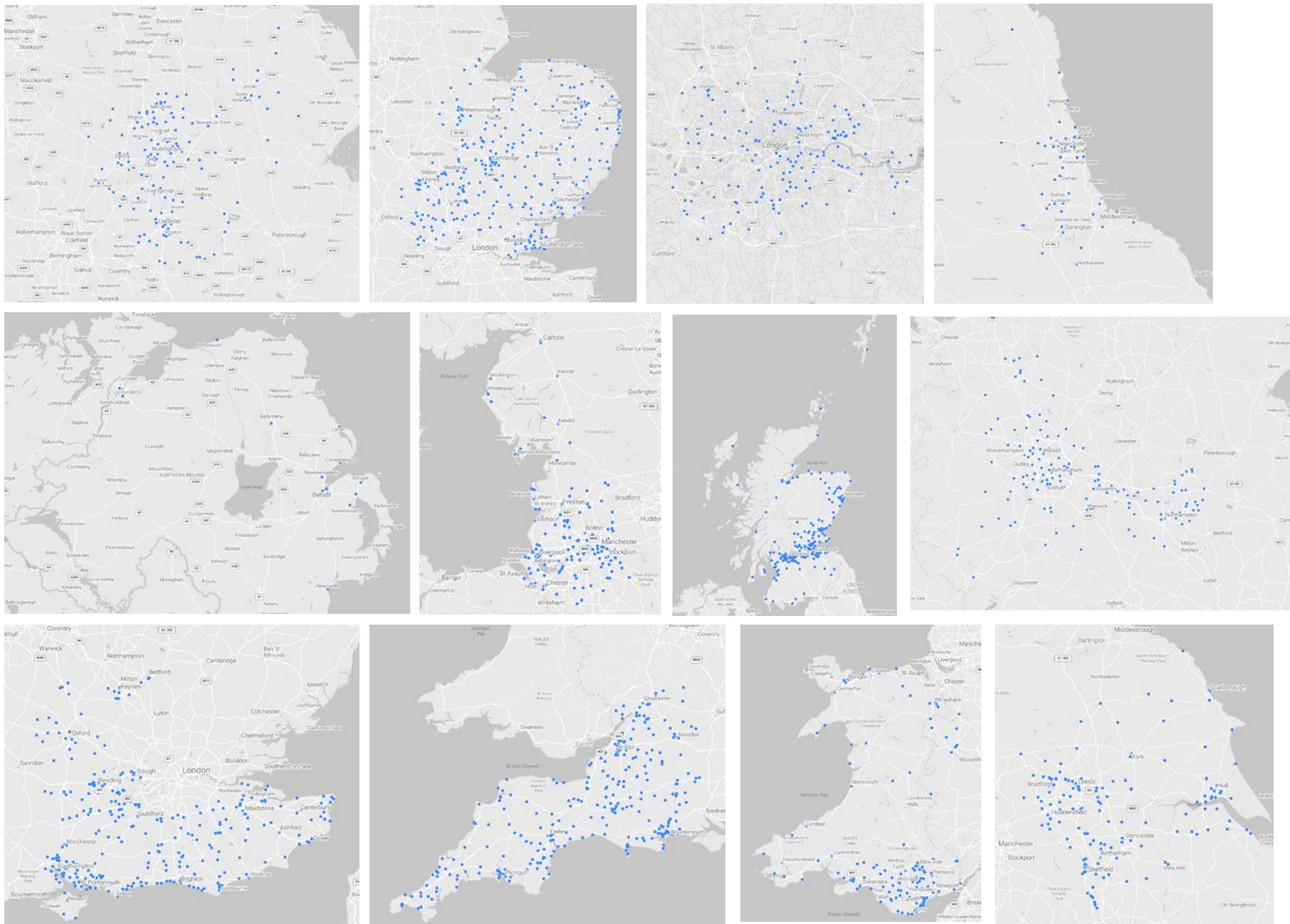
3.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Southeast, East of England and Southwest regions have the most skateable spaces by far, with Scotland closely following. Northeast, Northwest, Wales and Yorkshire & Humberside have the least.

Northern Ireland has the fewest parks but an average spread by size. London, East Midlands and West Midlands have a moderately high number of spaces.

Due to the nature of postcode mapping, there is some 'bleed' over regional borders. i.e. some regions include a selection of parks within the border of another nearby region.





Figs 2.1-2.13: A map of every region and its associated skateable spaces.

4. SPORT ENGLAND PRIORITY AREAS



4.1 APPROACH

Since the Sport England Priority areas have expanded from the original 53 areas, this report includes all Current Sport England Place Partnerships, comprising:

- Phase 1: the original 53 Priority and Expansion Places
- Phase 2: the later additional priority places (2025 expansion)
- Existing Place Partnerships: the 12 established Place Partnerships (formerly Local Delivery Pilots)

Skateparks in priority areas use a point-in-polygon spatial join, matching each park's latitude and longitude to the relevant local authority polygon in the priority GeoJSON. The grand total of priority areas is 92. Some parks fall within a priority polygon, however, do not include a name. This is because the local authority's name in our dataset may not match that used by Sport England exactly.

4.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

We can conclude that a number of skateable spaces fall in the above priority areas, see figure 3.

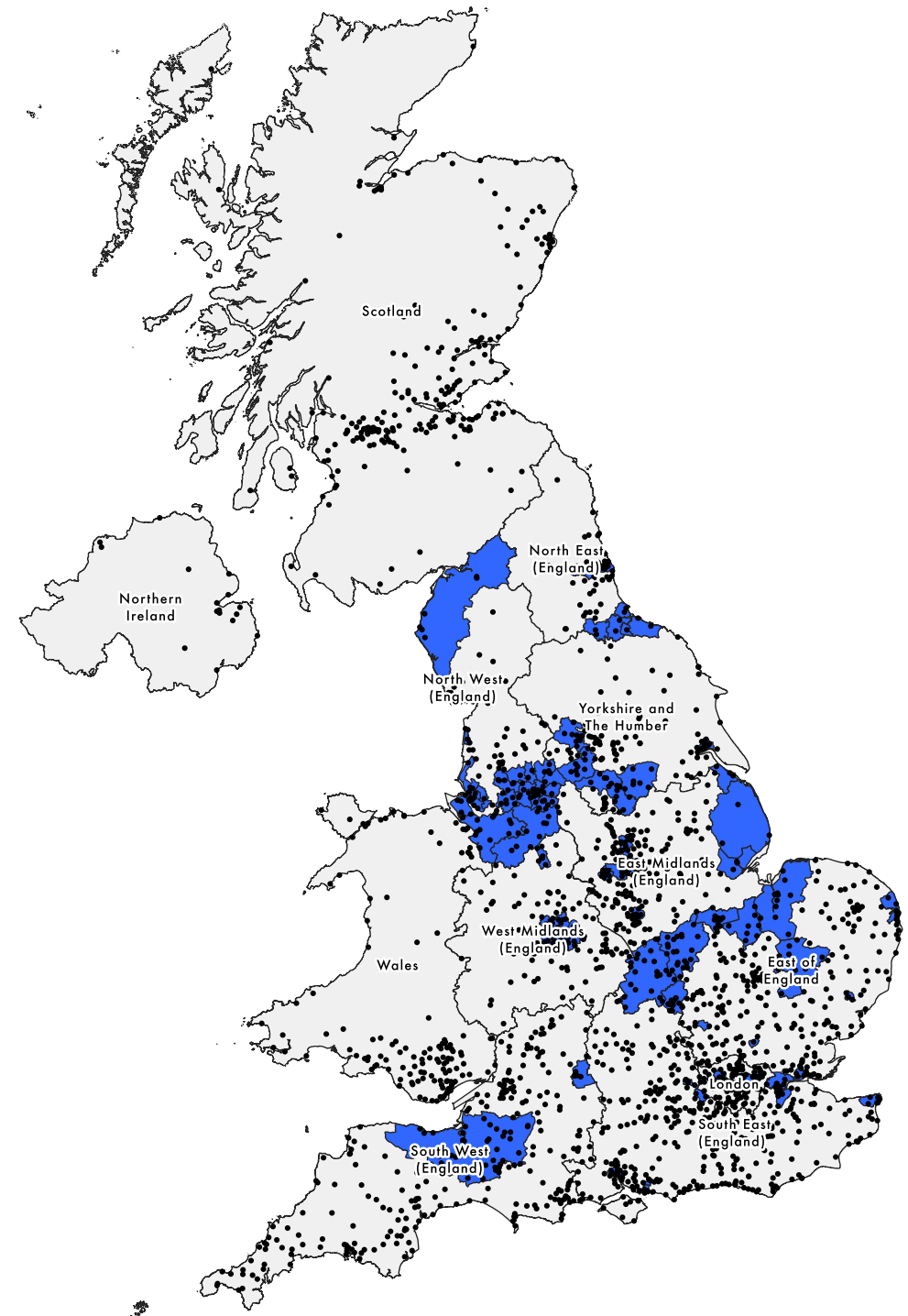


Fig. 3 A map showing the location of available Sport England priority areas and the skateable spaces within them.

5. INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE INTERESTS



5.1 APPROACH

In order to compare the UK's stock of skateparks to Olympic level design criteria, the project team conducted an in-depth review of all available guidance on international performance standards. The team also used insight from the recent design of competition facilities in Norway, working alongside World Skate.

A summary of specification was produced, alongside comment on what this means for new a generation of riders in the UK.

Standards for the design and construction of Olympic level competition facilities is governed by an organisation called World Skate. Covering 13 wheeled sports disciplines including inline skating and scootering, World Skate's mission statement is "To champion the global growth, development, and inclusivity of all roller sports".



Fig. 4: Map showing 8 locations of UK national team qualifying events - London, Manchester, Cardiff, Warrington, Glasgow, Cornwall (x2), Hemel Hempstead

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

5.2.1 OLYMPIC COMPETITION FACILITIES – WORLD SKATE SPECIFICATIONS

Many councils strive to build 'Olympic standard' facilities. The reality is that to be certified for an Olympic standard competition event by the international skateboard governing body World Skate, facilities (both indoor and outdoor) must meet a rigid set of parameters.

To date, no UK skatepark has hosted an official World Skate Olympic qualifying event. These qualifying events are held internationally, as no UK facility currently meets the standards, as set out in detail below. As a result, leading UK team riders train overseas.

However, in order to develop national standings and to develop an Olympic team, a range of the UK skateparks have hosted national / selection competitions. These include privately managed indoor parks Greystone (Manchester), Baysixty6 (London), Spit and Sawdust (Cardiff), XC (Hemel Hempstead), Loading Bay (Glasgow) and Ramp 1 (Warrington) and public outdoor facilities Concrete Waves (Cornwall), and Mount Hawke (Cornwall).

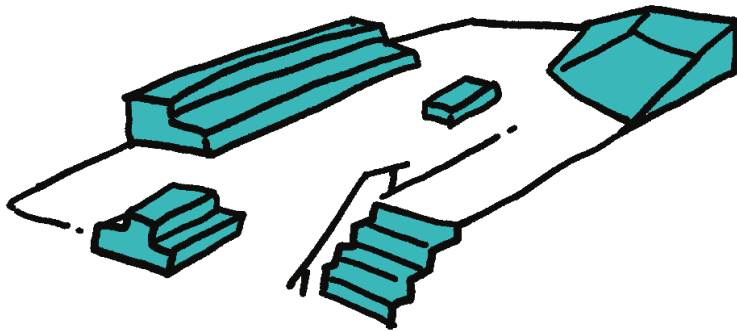
To be Olympic competition standard, parks must get a 'C class certification' from World Skate. This requires a multistage review of their design and construction with review costs amounting to €25,000. If a facility were to host the Olympics (and provide what is referred to by World Skate as a "Field Of Play" for the Olympic Games) parks require a 5 star C class facility certification. To receive such a certification, various meetings, reviews and eligibility checks must be carried out. Final technical submission includes completion of a range of technical drawings and a design narrative, alongside a detailed site inspection and construction test pour.

While design criteria are prescriptive (listed below), World Skate encourages creativity and individuality across park design:

“The non-standardisation and ongoing evolution of skatepark design is essential for skateboarding to thrive and progress.” (World Skate – Facility Certification Rules Version 1 October 2021)

To identify what characterises a high quality skatepark, we can interpret World Skate’s design and construction criteria, below.

5.2.2 OLYMPIC STANDARD DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION CRITERIA



STREET STYLE PARK

An Olympic standard competition street-style course must be between 950 – 1900m² and be composed of features and elements typically found in an urban environment such as stairs, rails, ledges, and banks. The configuration of these elements must allow riders to have enough speed for consistent flow when approaching all obstacles on the course. The course must contain various individual features that allow equal opportunity for athletes of varying abilities to perform various types of tricks despite stance.

Obstacles in the high sections must be between 1.2- 1.6m in height and include either rails, “Hubba” ledges, or both. Stair sets and gaps bigger than 1.6m are

allowed, but not demanded.

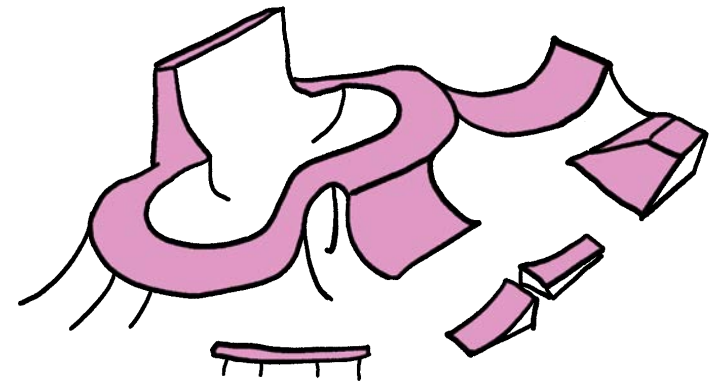
A low section must include elements with max height of 0.8m and should also include stairs, rails and/ or ledges. Generally, the design should provide versatility to users as well as a range of possible lines.

PARK STYLE PARK

An Olympic standard competition ready park-style course must be 800m² – 1700m² and be composed of interconnected radial transitions and banked walls, built at various declinations, depths and heights, which are configured in a layout that provides athletes with the necessary amount of riding speed for consistent flow. The design must also include several integrated technical features providing athletes with a larger variety of trick options.

The facility must include a range of depths, including a deep end min 2.4m including vert, and a shallow end with range of heights not exceeding 1.8m in height.

Both shallow and deep end areas within the course should contain various features such as hips, spines, banks, vertical walls, volcanos, and love seats etc. The edging or coping may include both metal pipe and/or concrete swimming pool style coping (pool coping). Any intermediate depths are allowed between deep and shallow ends.



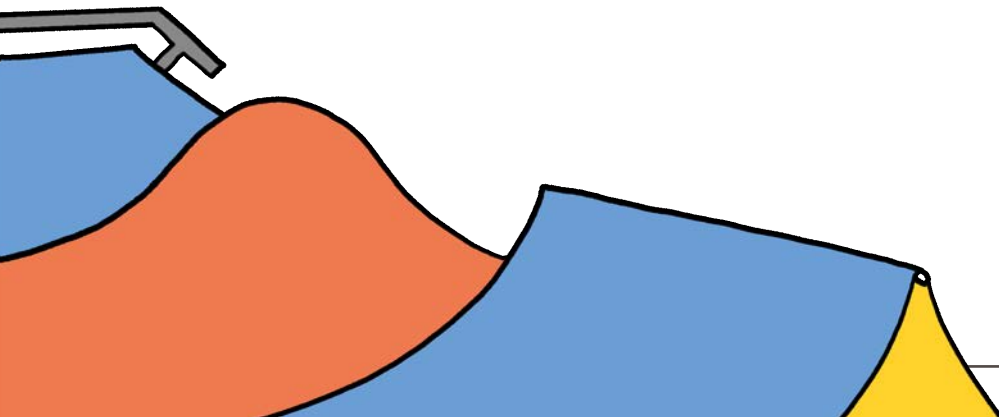
FLOW REQUIREMENTS

Across both street and park style courses, flow is a key consideration to be classed as Olympic standard. World Skate defines flow as: “The ability to skate through the whole course in various ways with an adequate speed to perform tricks of different types, with various amplitudes and technical levels, using a limited effort to continue without any forced interruption caused by design of the course”.

Flow considers the positioning of features and elements throughout the skatepark, geometric characteristics (height, inclination, width, curvature, etc.) of features and elements and materials and finishes of rolling surfaces.

Efficient flow lines provide riders with adequate speed enabling the execution of multiple tricks in succession, without the need to stop or step off the skateboard. Well-designed flow lines also help to enable a safe and efficient circulation in the skatepark when many athletes are using the course at the same time.

The quantity and quality of the lines available in a skatepark must take absolute priority during design and is a key part of the certification process.



LOGISTICS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Across both street and park style facilities, there are a range of other factors and spatial provisions to consider for the facility to be Olympic standard. Suitable space must be available for: changing rooms, VIP area, toilets, athletes lounge (50-100m², anti-doping test room (15-20m², judging booth (14-24m², presenter booth (8-16m²), shaded area, media area, media installations, first aid (9m²) and catering zone. World Skate provides in their guidance further detail on the arrangement and placement of each of these areas. These can be permanent features or temporarily erected.

Appropriate space must be allowed for advertisement placement. Sensitive landscape integration should be incorporated around the site. The layout and location of the facility needs to consider local traffic and security provision.

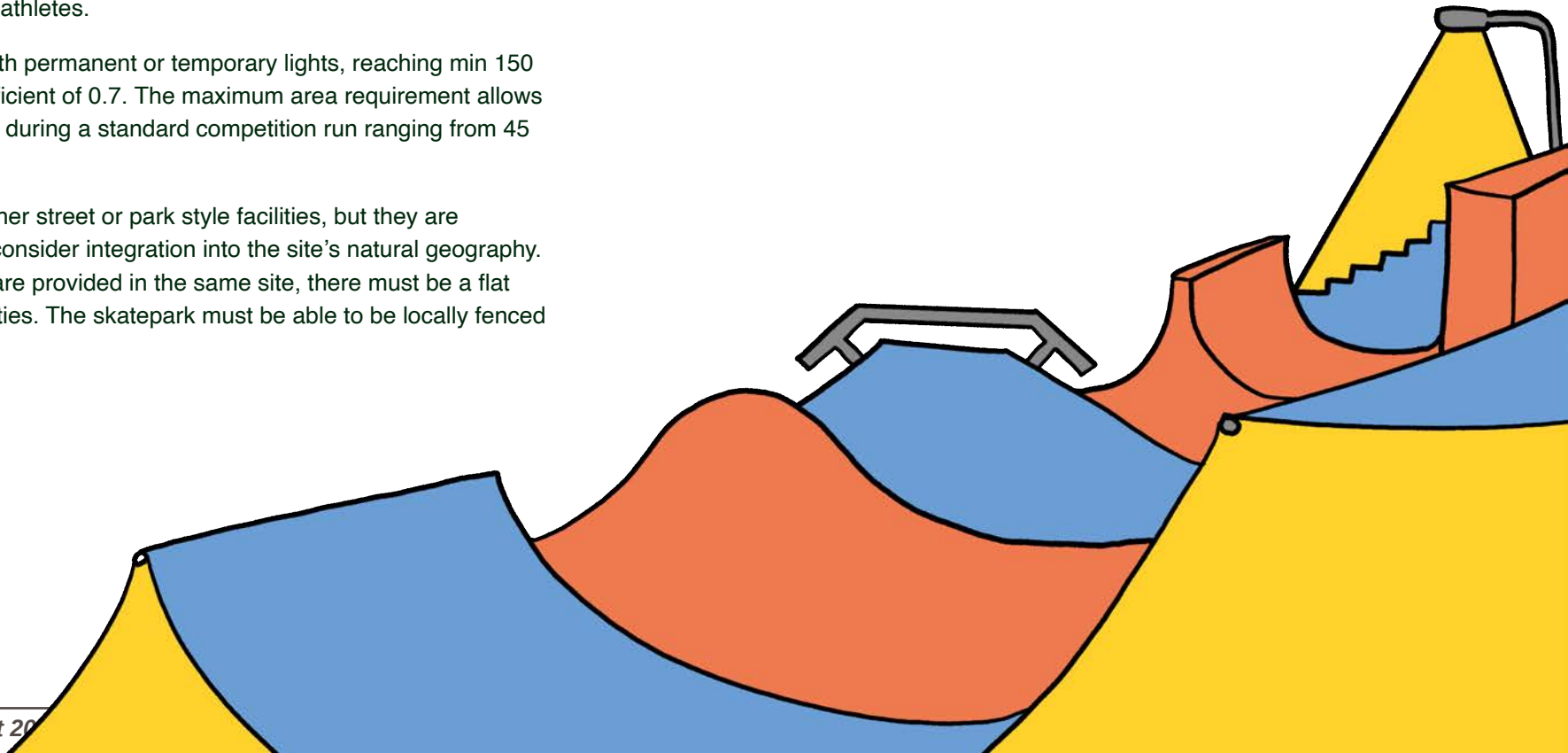
The nearest public transport links and vicinity to town centre and local skate shop are also taken into consideration for classification. Ample parking spaces must be available and pedestrian traffic routes considered to allow a separate route into the facility for public and competing athletes.

The course must be lit, either with permanent or temporary lights, reaching min 150 LUX level with a uniformity coefficient of 0.7. The maximum area requirement allows for the efficient use of the space during a standard competition run ranging from 45 to 60 second.

There is no defined shape to either street or park style facilities, but they are encouraged to be creative and consider integration into the site's natural geography. If both street and park facilities are provided in the same site, there must be a flat 10m buffer space between facilities. The skatepark must be able to be locally fenced off during competitions.

The facility must be visually appealing, and materiality is a key consideration. All skateable surfaces must be perfectly smooth and provide rigidity for users. Facilities are not just limited to concrete slabs. Any temporary facility must be predominately concrete. Indoor competition facilities can be wood but must show comparable rigidity to cement with a support structure that does not flex when used.

Surfaces must not show a deviation more than 1% of radius of the curve with max of 20mm. Slopes of 1-2% must be provided for drainage outdoors. Performance grip tests must be carried out. Overly dark or bright colours must not be used, considering TV broadcast suitability and sun reflexivity.



AUTHOR'S COMMENT

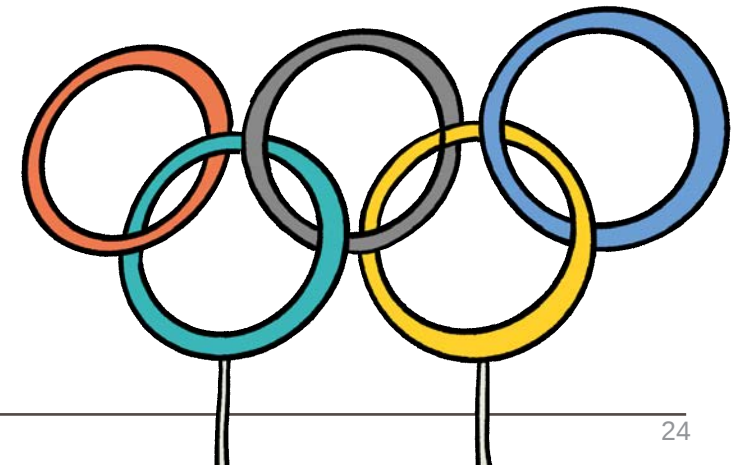
There is huge appetite for an Olympic- standard, competition ready facility in the UK. This call is not just from ambitious skaters and a supportive national governing body, but by local authorities who want to be credited as sowing the seeds for the skatepark that produced the next Sky Brown.

There are certainly some facilities in the UK that meet parts of street, park, or logistics criteria set by World Skate, but not one that meets all 3.

To deliver such a facility requires significant investment and collaborative working with expert design and construction teams and World Skate, alongside SBGB and a relevant local authority.

From discussions with the performance team at SBGB and informed by their experience coaching UK team riders, it is important to differentiate an Olympic relevant park in practical terms to what is offered on the world circuit, considering also what is best of riders to become familiar with. Many Olympic 'Field Of Play' deep ends tend to be 3m+ with vert extensions of up to 3.5, which is much larger than what is currently on offer in the UK, as well as the core World Skate requirement of min 2.4m. The limited mid-to-advanced transition scale, particularly in the 1.8–2.6m range has been reported to restrict domestic progression opportunities. Of course, it is not all about competition. Progression-aligned design is also linked with community, with certain facilities attracting riders from across the UK to enjoy a different, more challenging style of park.

With that said, anecdotal evidence suggests competition level parks across street and park (especially park style), are used by far fewer riders when compared to more open, 'normal' skateparks, delivered with broad usability in mind.



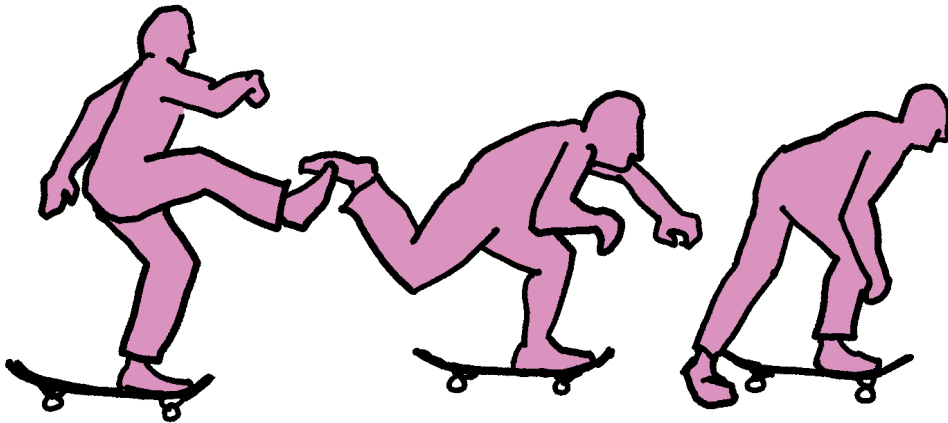
6. SUMMARY OF USE PER TYPOLOGY



6.1 APPROACH

Regional Associates responded to questions about the ability levels catered for in each skateable space and the opportunities for progression. From the statistical and free text responses we were able to analyse patterns and trends. A series of interviews deepened those insights and transcripts were categorised into key areas of research using thematic coding.

The research associates gathered the names of and presence of user groups and groups of people from communities local to skateable spaces where members work voluntarily. These groups often form around a specific project e.g. maintenance or fundraising to create a new space. Some are formally constituted as Community Interest Companies and others exist as less formal arrangements.



6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

6.2.1 OUTDOOR PURPOSE-BUILT PARKS:

In terms of usage our research found that several factors influence usability. These are; ability, where they are located, differences according to the time of day, their condition, the materials from which they are constructed and the impact of user groups. All of which affect the use of skateable spaces.

ABILITY

By ability, most of the outdoor, purpose-built skateable spaces in the UK cater for beginners. Particularly the newer ones which offer a range of obstacles which support both entry level and progression.

LOCATION

Parks located on the edge of conurbations and out of sight from passers-by are under used due to safety concerns and reports of anti-social behaviour (see also section 8). In the Southwest, parks are more evenly spread across the region and are not clustered around towns and cities. Remote locations and lack of transport links lead to a lack of accessibility for many. In contrast, centrally sited parks such as key spaces in Nottinghamshire are highly rated.

TIME OF DAY

A temporal dimension affects use. All skateable spaces cater for a range of users often separated temporally, with children and young people often using parks to 'bomb around' in the time immediately after school. Site visits taking place during weekdays often found parks to be barely occupied or not in use at all. The relationship between skateparks and playparks is noted in that skatepark use during school hours is used by adults with predominantly school aged children using skateable spaces for two hours after school and during the weekends and school holidays.

CONDITION (WHERE IMPACT AFFECTS USAGE)

In relation to usage, poor condition and poor design affect use negatively. There are quite a lot of metal and run down parks which are not being used and many of which were reported as un-skateable.

MATERIALS

Materials used to build skateable spaces affects their use and perception. Concrete parks with a range of skateable obstacles and varying scale are better for beginners, while concrete parks with larger, steeper and more complex forms tend to suit more advanced users.

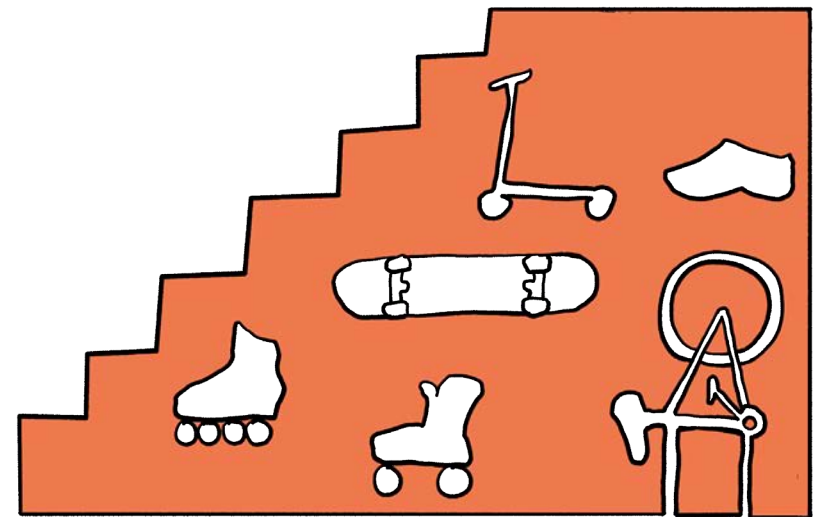
Parks with ramps constructed using metal with an asphalt base (a construction technique popular in the late 1990s and 2000s) are under used and show a greater propensity of anti-social behaviour (partly due to the amount of void spaces under ramps causing an abandonment, noted by observation of broken glass and litter affecting their use. Metal ramps, built with void spaces, amplify noise and built stigma with how all skateparks function to members of the public. Timber and metal parks can have fixings that over time become a risk to users and require regular, costly maintenance.

Of all the materials used to create skateparks, Concrete is far superior in terms of usability, robustness and its ability to be creatively formed. There is an important distinction that should be noted between pre cast, modular concrete skateparks and hand finished, free form, cast in situ concrete skateparks. When we discuss best practice for skatepark design and construction, we are referring to hand shaped, free-form concrete parks. Comparatively, pre cast, modular concrete skateparks are often considered in the same category in form of design and use as timber / steel parks, that are modular in layout and ill-conceived in terms of design.

When the first wave of professional UK skatepark companies began building free form concrete parks in the early 2000s, they were the ones doing hand finished, insitu concrete parks, drawing from work in North America developed in the 70s and 80s. This approach to building concrete parks produced the paradigm shift in the UK, not just concrete itself as a material.

AUTHOR'S COMMENT

Free form concrete parks offer superior riding quality due to smooth, long lasting finish and their ability to be hand finished and blended from one form to another, offering more creative park design options. Hand finished concrete provides a middle ground of grip and smoothness and prevents anti-social behaviour through reduction of void spaces (as is typical with metal parks) and the lack of combustibility (as is the case with timber parks). Freeform concrete parks are usually (but not always) produced alongside modern design and construction approaches, which consider more creative design and more appropriate spacing between elements. Leading suppliers of skateparks in the UK all now build in free form concrete.



USER GROUPS

Across the UK, 15% of skateable spaces have a user group. User groups make opportunities for usage by entry level skateboarders through lessons and events targeting beginners and supporting newcomers by making equipment available to borrow along with providing access to support for learning and community building through meetups. Concern was expressed about the effects of a loss of infrastructure around youth work, and contrasts between skateboarding and other organised sports, football, swimming for example which have more regular provision for learning.

Communities and their role in activating spaces impacts positively on their use. They also play important roles in contributing to the cultural status of certain skateable spaces which impacts on their use.

The presence of user groups was cited as an important factor for enhancing and developing the use of skateable spaces by a greater cross section of the communities that live close to them. The following data outlines both the location of and significance of these user groups.

Skateable Spaces With User Groups

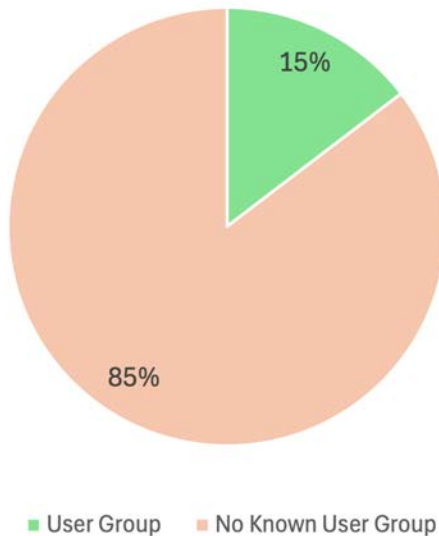


Fig 5: Skateable spaces with a user group



Fig 6: A map showing the location of skateable spaces with known user groups (n = 281)

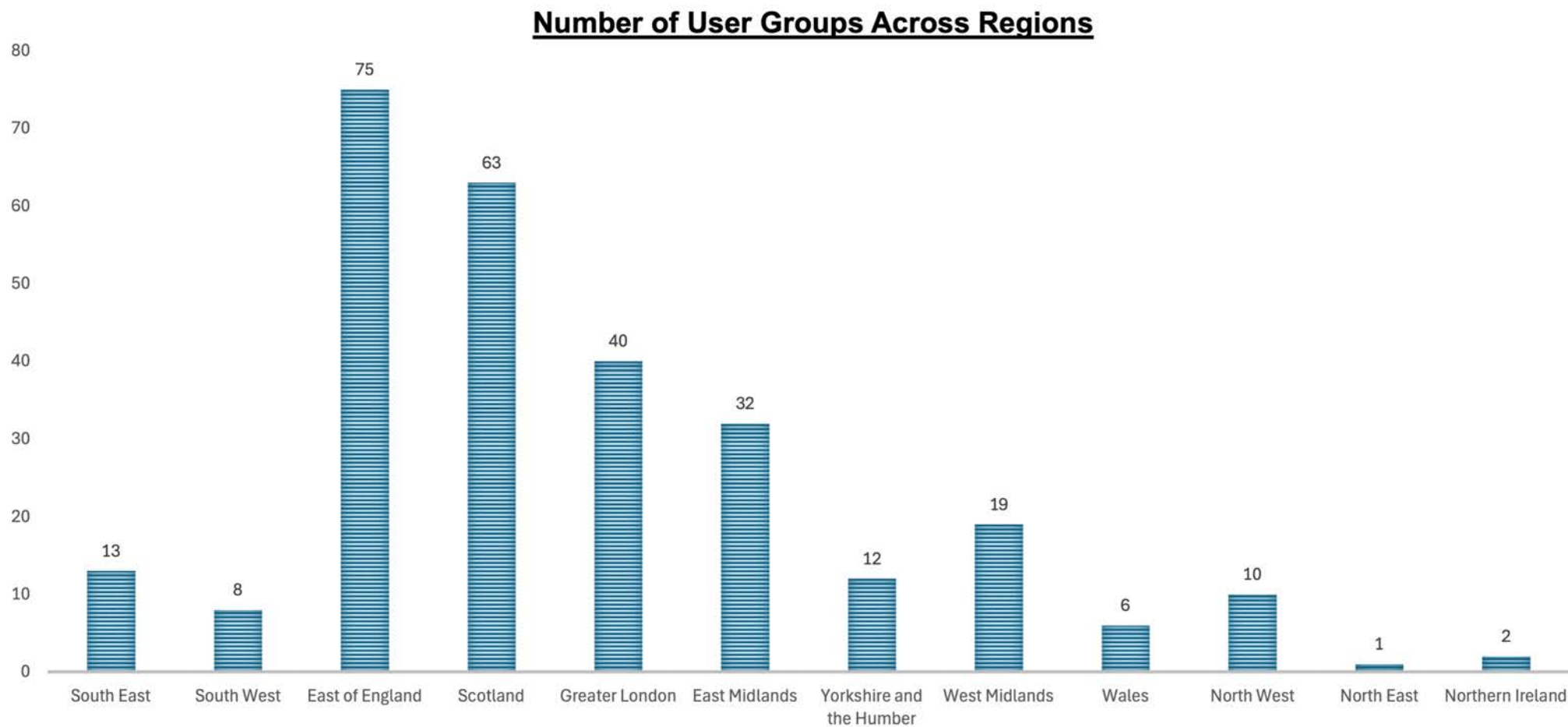


Fig. 7: A bar chart showing spread of user groups across regions.

The following **quotes** have been taken from site surveys which outline the impact of having a local user group. Anecdotal evidence shows the connection of user groups to developing DIY elements, tackling anti-social behaviour, campaigning for new skate parks (and involving themselves in the design and construction), developing relationships with the local council, providing skateboard coaching and Jams, building relationships to local skate shop, fundraising and wider local skills development.

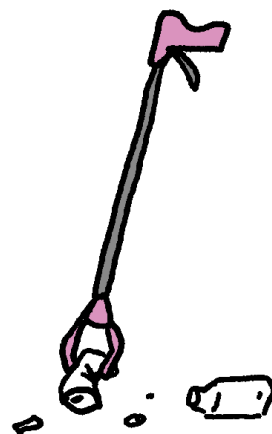
“The park has received more use since the local formal user group, Wharfeside DIY, started adding DIY features to the park.”

(Otley Skatepark, Yorkshire & Humberside)

“Local skaters did band together [in campaigning for refurbishment]” (Finsbury Park Skatepark, Greater London)

“Litter is routinely picked up and cleaned away by the locals” (Pentwyn Leisure Centre Skatepark, Wales)

“This park is used for lessons in the summer. Girls skate lessons and boxing which was really well attended in 2024.” (Didcot Skatepark, Southeast)



“It’s a famous DIY spot been ridden for years. Birmingham Skate Spaces are working with the council to try to extend the tiny features outside of the stairs that are there (not designed for skating but people do). Iconic Birmingham DIY spot that we hope to get officially opened”. (Fastlands, West Midlands)



“The main issue regarding Bury Skatepark is the anti-social activity and groups it attracts (who are not there to “use” the park), and the organised user group has been very vocal on their social media about these issues, and in communication with the local police to help remedy this” (Bury Skatepark, North West)

“Cambourne Skatepark is a metal-based park on tarmac, initially built in 2005, and then following considerable consultation with the local community and user group in 2019, it was redesigned and rebuilt in 2021 for under a £100,000 budget half funded by council money and half by grants (albeit still a metal-based “pre-fab” park that shares many resemblances to the initial park). The design itself consists of larger-than-average sized ramps and obstacles (arguably more suited to BMX and scooting) thus intimidating to many skaters, but there is also a “beginner section” off to the side of the main park that is perfect for learning how to skate and early progression. The park has floodlights and is also located adjacent to Cambourne Sports Centre (thus nearby access to toilets etc...)” (Cambourne Skatepark, East of England)

“Recently, a community group added a sanctioned DIY quarterpipe. It is interesting that both this park and Otley have been able to build upon the original spaces with permission, likely a result of having organised user groups.” (Otley Skatepark, Yorkshire & Humberside)

“There is some evidence online to suggest there was a user group call the Swaffham Skate Mob that got came together to get the skatepark funded and built.” (Swaffham Skatepark, East of England)

“While there is not a dedicated user group, there are a handful of local skaters who were instrumental in making this skatepark happen, and who could be relied on if ever the skatepark came under threat. Events include skateboard coaching sessions, jams held by the local skate shop, and informal jams hosted by locals at least once a year - usually dubbed “Baycation”. Lady Bay skatepark was originally one of the oldest skateparks in Nottingham, the first iteration being a community-campaigned for wooden mini ramp in the late 1990s.” (Ladybay Skatepark, East Midlands)

“Although a skatepark user group probably doesn’t exist, it’s worth noting that this skatepark was part-funded by ‘Big Kirk Hallam’ - a lottery-funded, ten-year resident-led community programme.” (Kirk Hallam Skatepark, East Midlands)

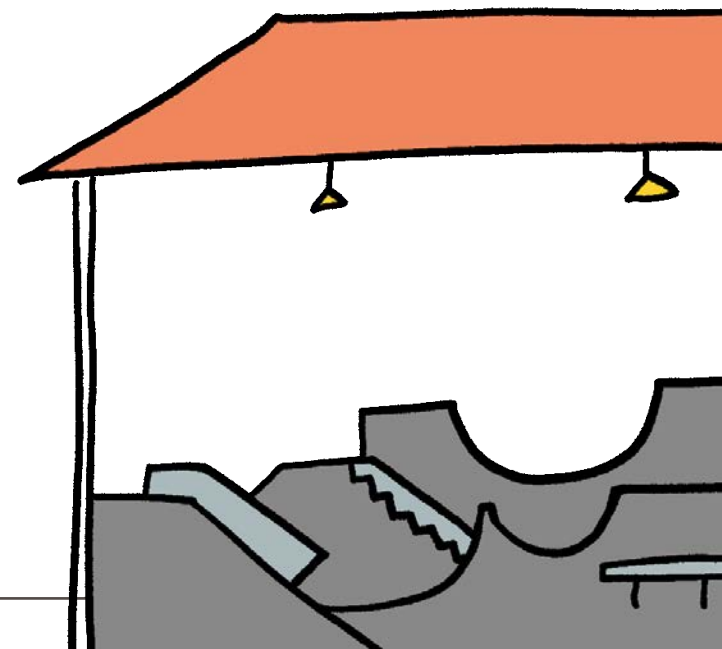
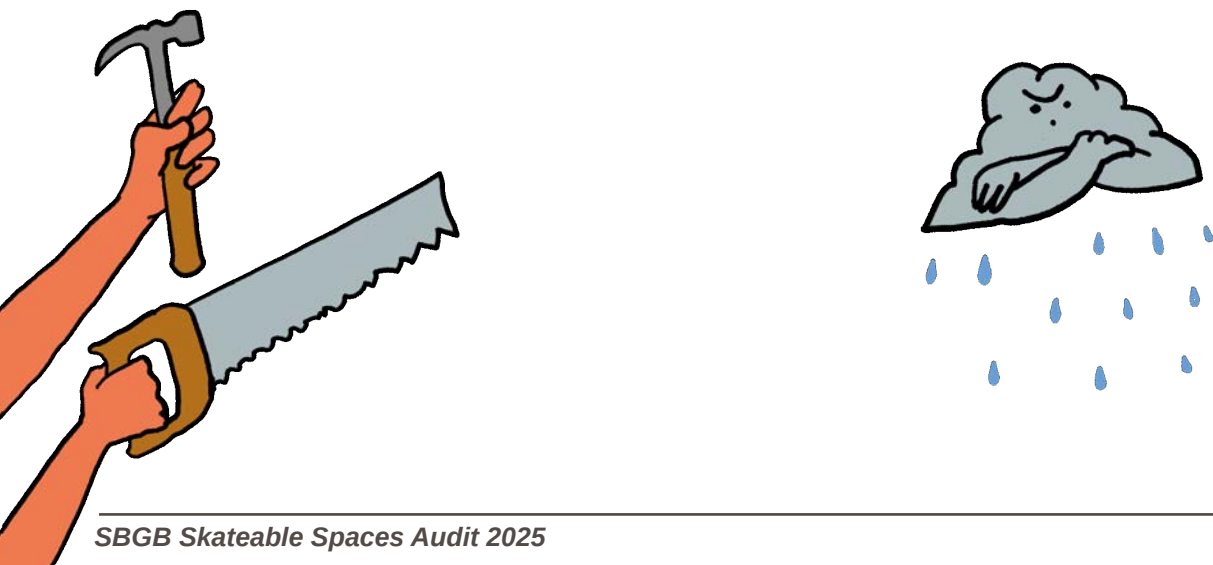
“@trumpingtonskatepark host regular skate jams called “Full Moon sessions”, where the local community bring their own generators and lighting to enable (and film) a skate-session in the dark evening periods (and afternoons around the winter periods) - the issue of the lack of provisioned lighting for the park (a concurrent issue across Cambridge skatespaces) limits the full potential of this

community social infrastructure.” (Trumpington, East of England)

6.2.2 INDOOR PARKS

On average per year, it rains on roughly one in every three days in the UK, with regional averages heavily influenced by westerly Atlantic winds. According to the BBC Meteorological services; Scotland and Wales are significantly wetter, averaging over 170 days of rain annually, while England is drier, with about 120–130 days. Northern Ireland averages around 14–15 days of rain monthly in winter. Indoor parks can offer consistency as they are not subject to the effects of weather. However, we understand that the business environment for indoor facilities is challenging due to running costs, this creates a higher cost to users which impacts on accessibility, along with a difficult to sustain business model and limited opening hours.

Indoor spaces provide good examples of inclusive provision with learning opportunities offered in structured ways and sessions organised by characteristic (gender, ability, age. Timed sessions for different skate communities meant that in the Southeast in particular scoring of facilities and accessibility is temporal, i.e. in some sessions they would score a 10 for ‘welcoming’ but a lower score at other times. The recent closure, or move to online only, of several skate shops across the UK shops has impacted some regions, and there are examples of shops being incorporated into indoor parks as a result.



6.2.3 DIYS

Colwick in the East Midlands is a good example of a skateable space being used well: ‘an example of a wooden skate park that got dilapidated after 10-12 years and had to be removed by the council because it was unsafe and it’s one that [Skate Nottingham] have actually been able to engage with councils on and are taking that forward as a, ‘hopefully, pro-DIY, renovation’.

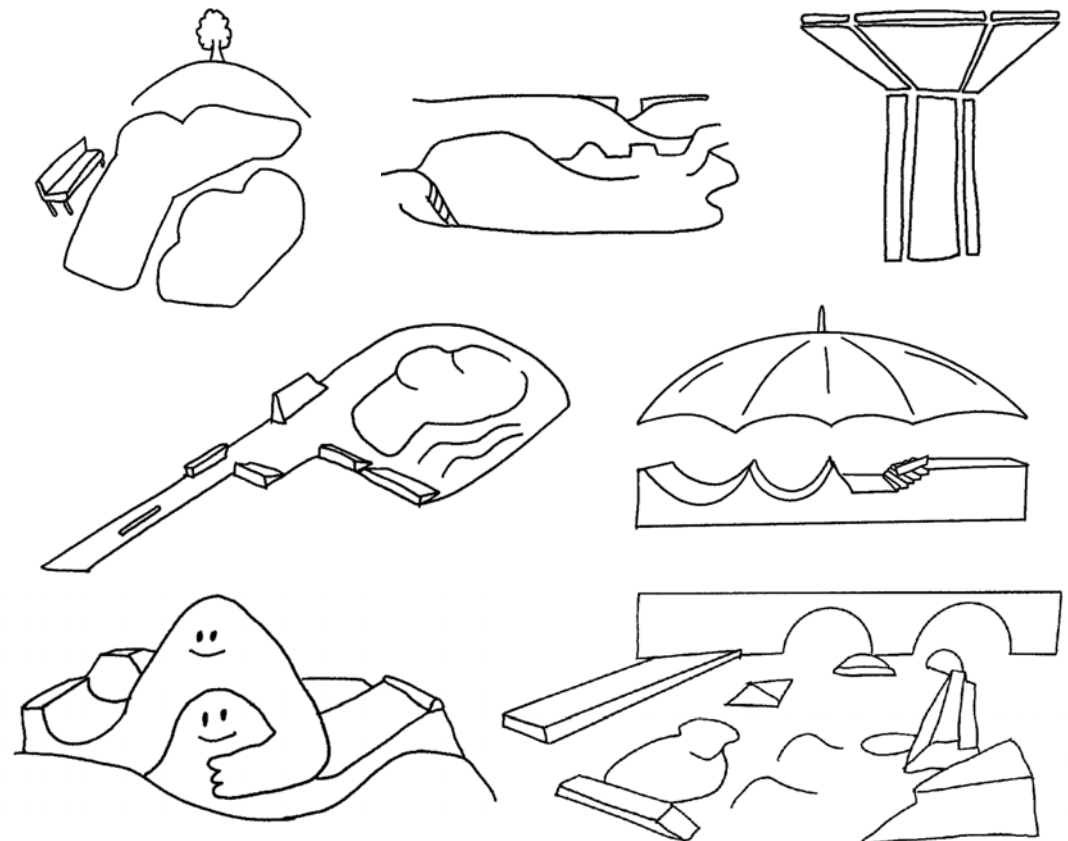
AUTHOR’S COMMENT

DIYs account for a very specific and especially impactful form of skateable space, that has wide reaching impacts on the communities and individuals that surround them. Their significance relates to wider academic considerations of democratic participation, collective action, and how individuals contribute to collective goals within a community. For many DIYs there are 3 dimensions to participation, the taking part, the contribution and the benefitting of the space, all of which contribute to collective and individual enrichment. DIYs require a certain degree of skilled people and space and is noted across the interviews as creating increased sense of ownership, community cohesion and defined notions of quality to spaces.

DIYs stand as a very different typology of skateable space when compared to purpose built skateparks. They frequently occur in brownfield sites within city and town centres, which avoid the problem of peripherality noted across the report. Often the way in which they are formed (organising volunteers, self-building, utilising political resilience) produce strong desires to protect the spaces when under threat. This in turn often can produce a more nurturing, passionate community than is seen in other typologies of skateable space, highlighting a meaningful connection between users and the facility.

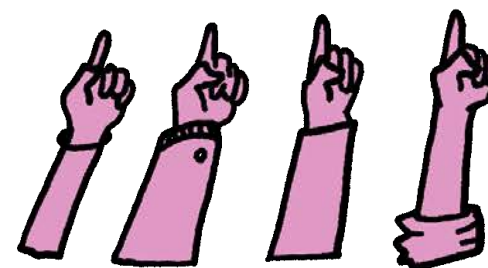
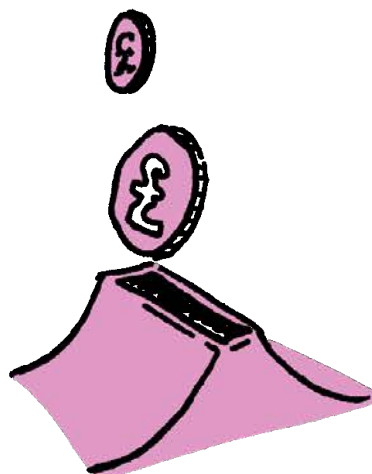
6.2.4 SUBSTANTIAL SPOTS

Substantial spots include skateable spaces that are not designed for skateboarding and consists of more than one skateable element. Substantial spots attract visitors from far afield and offer a ‘session-able’ experience for users. Their location, often in the centre of conurbations, offers the opportunity for communities to develop over time. These spots also provide the opportunity for more interaction between skate community and members of the public, which can help develop a sense of mutual understanding of the needs of others. Although fewer in number, these spaces hold a considerable amount of cultural capital within the national skate scene, especially through skateboard media, due to their ‘authentic’ nature. Examples include Lloyds (Bristol), Southbank (London) and Bristo Square (Edinburgh).



6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE EQUITY IN USAGE:

- In discovering the number of run-down metal and asphalt ramps that are underused on outdoor public skateparks, we recommend working to influence local councils to replace outdated prefabricated ramps with **new concrete facilities**. This could build on the existing infrastructure if approached as a sustained, strategic program of development. Our research shows that there is a desire to see things improved, rather than diminished.
- In discovering the impact on usage where outdoor skateable spaces are located on the periphery of conurbations and in unsightly, inhospitable locations, we recommend the **importance of the aesthetics** of facilities as some of these facilities are not nice places to dwell. If seating, landscaping and appropriate maintenance is considered, it would be likely to increase users and visitors. This includes consistent provision of bike racks, water fountains and other ancillary items in development schemes.
- We discovered that some parks score well for safety but are poorly maintained. We recommend that local authorities work strategically to invest in **repairing facilities rather than demolishing or replacing them**. Our recommendation is to try to avoid splitting small communities by building new parks in new locations and consider investing in, maintaining and revamping existing facilities rather than letting them go into disrepair.
- On discovering that indoor skateable spaces serve communities throughout the year and include social spaces, cafes and skate shops. We recommend investment and **offering subsidies for entry** to reduce the barrier created by admission.
- In discovering the cultural significance around DIY skateparks and the impact they have on community formation, we recommend further support for these spaces and communities, to **encourage future democratic participation and sustained opportunities for community building and collective action**. Drawing from the example of West Midlands, this can be in the form of knowledge sharing in the construction standards, to provide long term sustainability. In other, more peripheral case, this could be provision of land, resources and political support to enable organic formation and growth.
- In discovering the value and cultural significance in use of substantial spots, we recommend that a sensitive approach is taken for their celebration and protection. This includes **identification of stakeholders, as well as transparent communication between parties about needs and goals**. Examples taken from Southbank, London show that poor relations can be overcome over time with relationship building and understanding of shared goals. It should be noted that in recent years, public support has been in favour of protecting these types of spaces.



7. HEALTH AND CONDITION

A picture of the overall health of UK skatepark infrastructure and its suitability for the UK skateboarding community.



7.1 APPROACH

This research did not set out to provide a technical condition report of all the UK's skateable spaces. We sought data to inform knowledge about the overall health of the infrastructure by calculating the physical usability as determined by local skateboarders and a rating for the consistency of condition. We gathered an itemised list of the range of obstacles and materials used for construction. We also asked about how happy users were with the condition. We developed a quality index in order to compare key factors nationally.

7.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Nationally, survey results show that the physical condition of a skateable space strongly contributes to its overall quality but does not dominate it. This is why the overall quality index speaks to other factors beyond just condition. For example, the presence of user groups strongly affects the overall quality and parks with frequent and well-attended events tend to have a higher quality index.

Figure 8 shows the average difference in quality from the national mean, where the error bars show the spread of the data, calculated using a standard deviation. Although there is some variation in regional quality around the national mean, the error bars show that the quality of skate space provision varies dramatically within each region, with some regions having much lower quality bounds than others. It is important to note that these have not been normalised by number of spaces. For example, Northern Ireland has a much smaller number of spaces than other regions, meaning that the quality score appears disproportionately high.

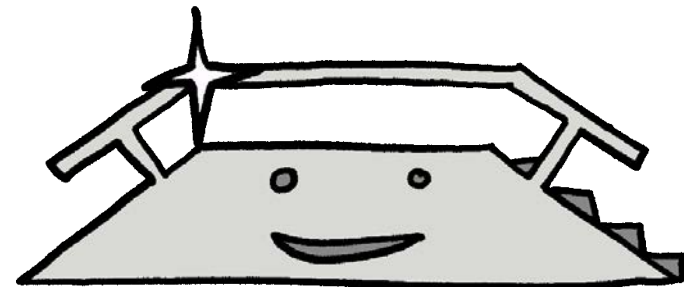


Fig. 8: A graph showing the regional mean (blue) and standard deviation (pink) of the overall quality index per region. The origin represents the national quality index average of 54.89. Regions of low quality are on the right of the chart, regions of high quality on the left.

As you can see from the graph there is a notable variation in each region. Across the regions, distinct reasons were given for a perceived lack of quality and consistency.

Some poorly designed skateable spaces are reported in every region especially in terms of there being too many obstacles and not enough clear flat ground. Some regional associates perceive that public money being wasted on parks that do not function adequately with a suggestion that this is sometimes used as a tick box exercise, to provide facilities for wheeled sports without ensuring they are fit for purpose.

Across the country, funding gaps affect maintenance for ongoing operational costs, including sealing and crack repair. It was reported that in the Southwest and the East of England the sealing of concrete is now standard as part of the construction budget, this was not the case previously.

Findings from surveys show that parks made largely from asphalt and metal tend to be lower on the scale of overall quality than other parks. Metal and asphalt ramps have not benefitted from ongoing maintenance. We received many reports about these being worn out, often with a dangerous gap between ramp and ground where the metal edge has shifted to create a ‘lip’, something which is very dangerous for skateboarders. Local councils will often continually pay for repairs to these facilities due to lack of resources for a replacement facility. To finance replacement concrete facilities local authorities usually rely on funding from Section 106 payments from housing developments or gain funds from landfill trusts or institutional funding.



Fig 8: A graph showing the regional mean (blue) and standard deviation (pink) of the overall quality index per region.

Local authorities who involve user groups at an early stage in the design and planning of skateable spaces are more likely to produce high quality and meaningful facilities, with local buy in and sense of ownership, which has an impact on long term governance, maintenance and activation.

A question being asked in Scotland around the condition of some parks explores the need to replace or renovate parts of the infrastructure. This consideration is generalisable nationally. In London, a desire to work smarter with councils, community organisations and Skateboard GB was noted. Like Scotland it was noted in London that there are risks to heritage assets in relation to developing new parks and abandoning (rather than renovating) older ones. This relates to both cost and

sustainability considerations, with repair jobs being both cost effective and more sustainable, as is seen in the refurbishment of Hackney Bumps and Stockwell Skatepark, London and the upcoming refurbishment of Livingston, Scotland.

The survey transcripts demonstrate notable insights on community maintenance with recommendations made for council/community partnerships. Strong advice nationally to use the holistic view of facilities and communities presented through this research and to lead infrastructure projects with ‘Needs Based Analysis’ rather than relying on the loudest voices in community consultations.

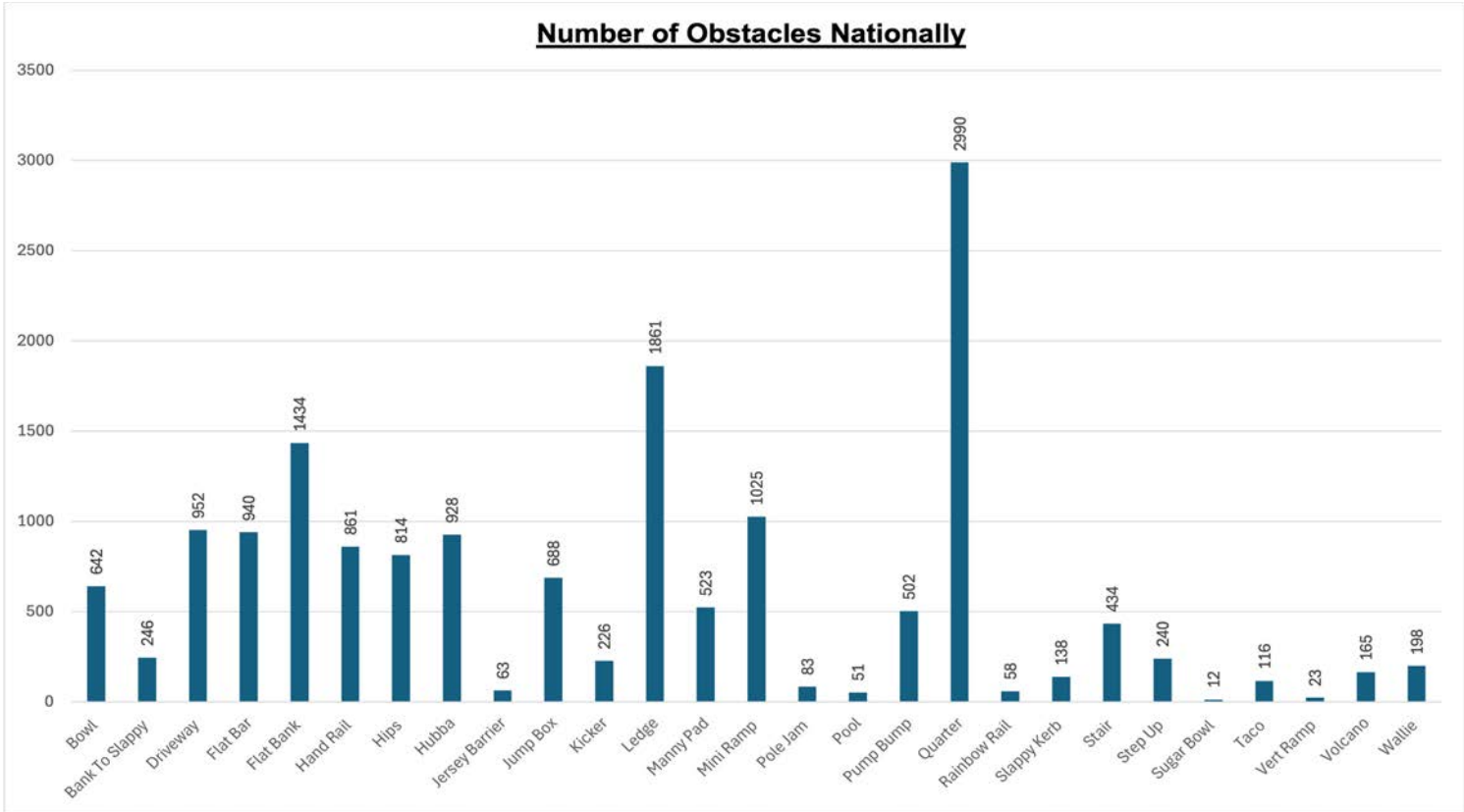


Fig 9: A chart showing number of obstacles nationally

7.3 SUITABILITY FOR UK SKATEBOARDING

AUTHOR'S COMMENT

When compared to leading examples in North America and Western Europe, the UK's skatepark infrastructure can be considered as below average, with some stand out examples as exceptions. When compared to countries where skateboarding is in its infancy, the UK's infrastructure can be considered as above average. With this said, it is noted that the quality of new facilities has shown vast improvement in recent years. This is due to increasing adoption of best practice in design and implementation by specialists and local authorities, upskilling of construction teams and increased competition between specialists in the market. There is still a lot of work to be done across all these areas, as well as identifying the role of appropriately sized sites and project budgets.

With the increasing effect of UK's cultural significance within the global skate community, across both brands and riders, it can be argued that the skatepark infrastructure needs to continue to develop in line with cultural output. The UK skate scene has always been stronger than the relative quality of our skateable spaces. It could be argued that the UK skatepark infrastructure currently does not adequately support the UK skateboarding community.

This can be exemplified by the lack of Olympic standard facilities. However, it is noted from across the data, that many local users feel well served by much-loved facilities despite questionable quality, because users have grown up riding them, affected by the rose-tinted effect of nostalgia and familiarity.



Skatepark Materials Nationally

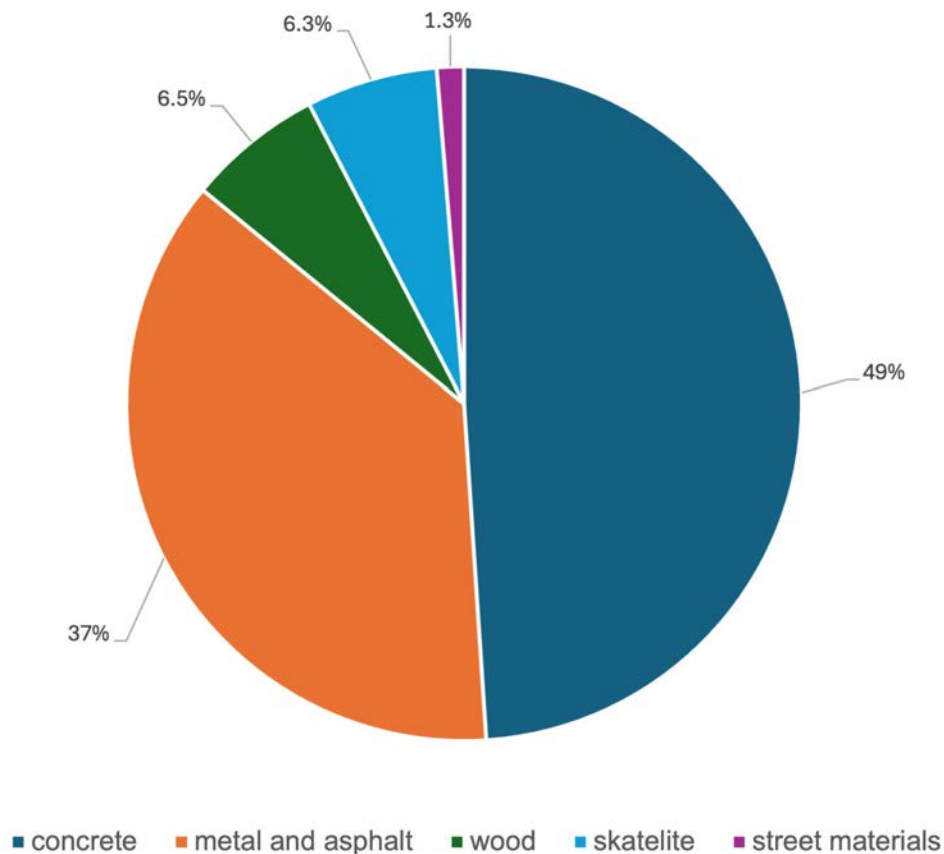
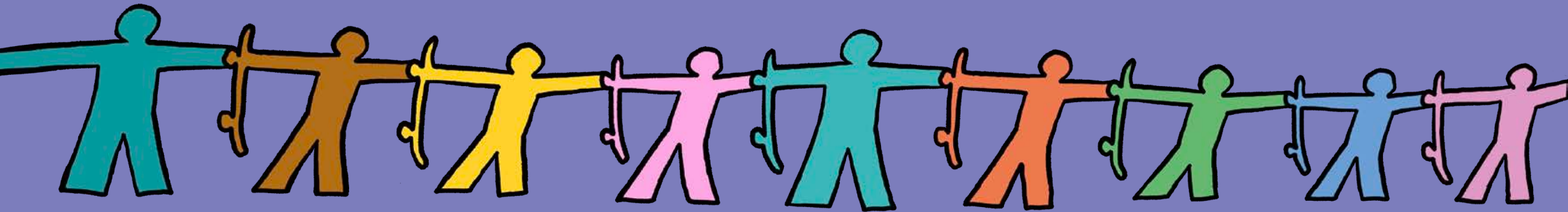


Fig 10: A chart showing the presence of materials used in construction of skateable spaces nationally.

8. MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SPACE AND COMMUNITY

What factors foster a meaningful connection between users and the space?



8.1 APPROACH

This data came from questions in the survey which focussed on user groups and cultural activities as well as comments made by skate associates about events and community action at skateable spaces. This was developed further through interviews with each regional associate which were transcribed and explored using a detailed thematic analysis. We analysed free text data from the surveys to deepen our understanding and to identify factors which positively contribute to meaningful connections and those which negatively affect communities, a selection of the contributing factors are included after each quote below and visualised by word clouds (Fig. 9 & Fig 10.) to show positive negative factors influencing meaningful connections.

8.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Meaningful connections are hard to define. From both surveys and interviews there are some key themes that emerge, dominated by the significance of active community engagement with a space. A key example of this engagement is the presence and opportunity presented by communities, in the forms of both informal and designated user groups to organise events and community activity to facilitate shared ownership.

It is not always the most pristine skateparks that have the best user feedback e.g. Eastleigh in the Southeast 'is a crusty old park which skaters love'. In the Northeast, existing communities are important for making links which build meaningful connections for newcomers and a system of programmed activities keeps spaces running and activated.

A combination of community and heritage also builds strong meaningful connections between space and users in older parks with a history of significance in skate culture. This effect occurs through a combination of tangible assets like the facilities themselves and also intangible cultural elements that are valued by a community - both the physical legacy and the cultural identity that has grown there and been passed on through the scene, this was especially noted in Greater London and in Scotland. The West Midlands in particular noted the importance of intergenerational

learning: where older users are able to act as role models for younger generations.

In the Northeast and East Midlands, it was reported that whilst the opportunities for beginners are good in terms of lessons, the scene involving more established skateboarders has diminished somewhat. This is important because a scene plays several roles in relation to skateable spaces:

- **Maintains the cultural connections to a space.**
- **Provides a culture for new skateboarders to get involved in which sustains engagement.**
- **Generates an active community who look after their space in providing learning opportunities, maintenance, event organisation and support for beginners.**

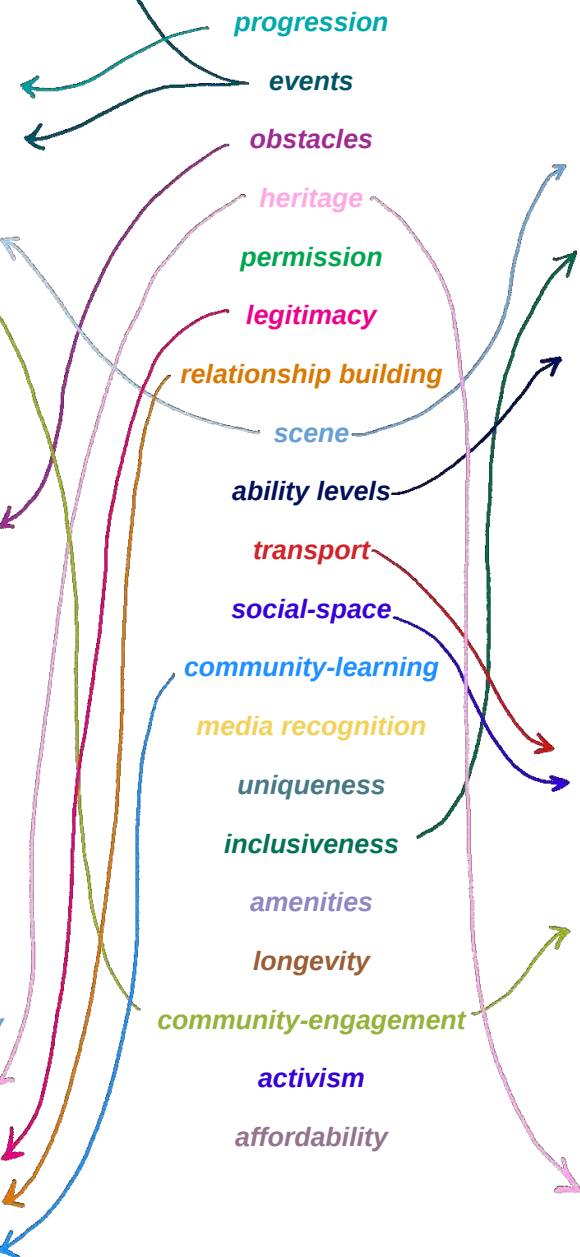


“Park had an opening jam and then nothing known of since in terms of competitions and jams...”
(Charlton Park Skatepark, Greater London)

“There has been no real need for mega repairs. The locals make sure the whole park is swept often. The whole park is inspected and painted before the main annual jam to make sure it’s at the best standard for the competitions and to make the area safe. The local scene is strong here; they love their park and have been doing a lot to clean up and improve the environment around their park and making the scene stronger for it!” (Falkirk skatepark, Scotland)

“Linton Skatepark is a purpose-built specialist designed outdoor concrete park - built and designed by Canvas in 2021. It replaced an old timber mini ramp that was falling into disrepair, vandalised and unliked by the local user groups. The new park is an exceptional provision, with a wide range of obstacles catering to both street and transition skating and catering to a range of abilities, as well as progression through these different skill levels. In simple is a very fun skatepark and one useable for a wide variety of skaters” (Linton Skatepark, East of England)

“The spot is one of the best, and most historic, in Leeds. Following the Playhouse’s renovation, completed around late 2019, it became an outwardly friendly skate [spot] thanks in part to a rapport developed with the head of security. Building on this foundation, PhD research (Harry Meadley’s) and project work under the Civic Leeds banner continued to foster this relationship.” (Playhouse spot, Yorkshire & Humberside)



“Burwell Skatepark is an outdoor concrete park designed by Opus Skateparks and Clark & Kent Contractors in 2018, that replaced the prior pre-fab wooden and tarmac park that existed in the space priorly. The local skateboard community (headed by what’s now known as Shredder Skate School) were central to the delivery of the new park, in terms of crowdfunding as well as in the actual design of the park (which especially caters to beginner skaters and progression). It is a regularly used skatepark and hosts multiple “events”, from regular skate lessons to organised competitions and skate jams. Overall, it is a good example of a simple and “gentle” skatepark design that is ‘usable’ for a range of different skateboarding abilities and is a good example of a local community collaboration with councils and designers.” (Burwell Skatepark, East of England)

“Amazing park with almost everything you could hope for. In lovely large park with lots to do, parking and train station nearby, shops, cafes etc within walking distance.” (Horsham Skatepark, Southeast)

“It has a strong local scene with people who keep on top of keeping it clean and fixing cracks etc, has had some minor repairs done to fix some issues with the original build. Council reasonably responsive, fitted new light bulbs recently which are much better light quality.” (Perth Skatepark, Scotland)

“ONE OF LONDON’S GRITTIEST SKATE SPOTS’
‘Royal Oak Skatepark: Where Legends Are Made and the Air Ain’t Fresh’ (Royal Oak Skatepark, London)

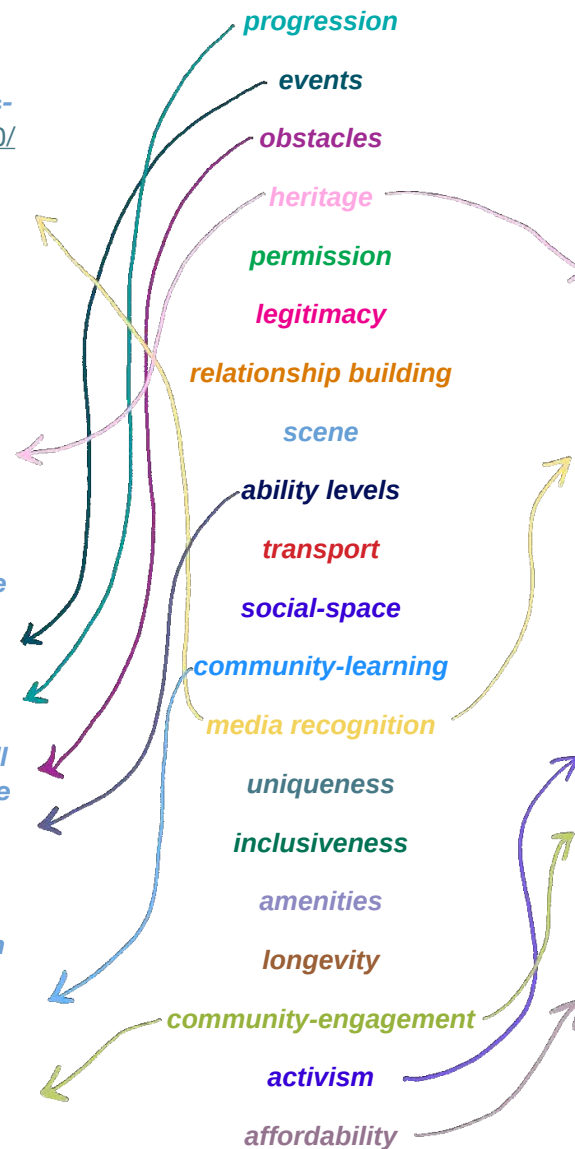
“This is quite probably the definition of crust!”

Technically it is also two separate bits very close by each other. It is a pretty strange facility, people might visit as a novelty value (see recent Dan Cates Instagram video where he visited it) rather than of it being something worth visiting. The bowl is like a cereal bowl, it is a perfect circle and quite mellow. " See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sqIHnk6Vlg> and <https://tracklocross.bike/2025/04/20/crusty-skateparks-of-scotland/>" (Cranhill Bowl, Scotland)

"This is a ~20-year-old skatepark, with a rough surface and showing its age, but loved by some local skaters for what it is." (Door One Skatepark, East Midlands).

"Radlands Plaza is A great skatepark and attracts a lot of skateboarders. Great range of street obstacles that replicate real street skating and plenty of space for flatground and for learning. The park has a good skate scene and has a safe and supportive atmosphere. Park has been around for over ten years and is still relevant and provides a great space for skaters to progress. Has free parking at the skatepark as well as lighting. Overall a great skatepark. There is a jam once maybe twice a year" (Radlands Plaza, West Midlands)

"Culturally the space has a cult following. There are a key crew around 10 people who have all been involved with the project from the get go. These people are all volunteers, they maintain the space and the gardens. We get people visit the park just to watch the skating and sit around the gardens. We work closely with the graffiti and there is a crossover of skaters who also write/draw graffiti. Birmingham Skate Spaces are granted a licence to build and extend the skatepark as its built to the appropriate BS standards, this is important and



sets Bournbrook apart from other DIYs. The space is entirely run and maintained by the community. We empty the bins and tend to the gardens." (Bournbrook DIY Skatepark, West Midlands)

"The spot is made up of 2 stretches of steep, brick flatbanks. It is challenging to skate but receives frequent documentation in Yorkshire skate videos and some international projects. It is one of the oldest skate spots in Wakefield. A recent print project I worked on about Wakefield skate history contains documentation of former Sidewalk Magazine editor Ben Powell skating there in 1989 and it has appeared in skate videos as recently as the past couple of years." (College Banks, Substantial Spot, Yorkshire & Humberside)

"One of the best examples of an indoor skatepark there is. Skater owned and operated (primary owner is also a local Labour councillor). Very affordable with great locally sourced healthy food options. A perfect example of what an indoor skatepark could be in 2025. Park also offers skate and food sessions through Sheffield Healthy Holidays club which provides free access for low-income families." (The House Skatepark, Indoor, Yorkshire & Humberside).

8.4. FACTORS NEGATIVELY INFLUENCING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Interview data showed other examples of factors that lead to a lack of meaningful connections, often being in direct opposition to the factors identified as positive. In Wales, security guards ‘protecting’ spots with significant heritage suggests issues with skateboarding as a legitimate activity. It is important to note that in some cases, a space’s illegitimacy is a positive factor in providing a meaningful connection in itself. However, this is not the case for all of the skateboarding community. In Wales also, lack of connection with non-skateboarding youths has led to community-built obstacles being destroyed and/or vandalised.

Barriers to entry can be seen in entrance fees for indoor parks. The notion of them being a private endeavour can also create a tension between their interests and that of the local skate scene.

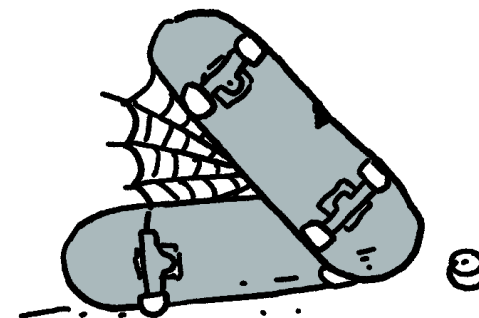
In Greater London a small number of core parks have active community groups whilst the majority don’t have community involvement, so, the skateparks are “not activated at all”.



In the Northeast the need for ongoing maintenance of the scene was noted, along with ongoing lessons and care for the facilities, just as it is, for example, with swimming pools and 5-a-side football pitches. The danger is that once people have learned to skate, they do not continue if there are no intermediate events to get involved with.

In Yorkshire and Humberside, the Southeast, Northwest and East Midlands, the recent closures of skate shops and/or change of allegiance in relation to brands rather than community focus in those areas has negatively affected the scene. Once known as a community hub providing equipment

but also, support and fostering community connections. The closure of skate shops and therefore the loss of events they would have previously organised along with the reduction in youth service provision, noted in the Southeast, is negatively affecting the meaningful connections between skateboarders and the spaces they use.



The following quotes (Fig. 12) from stakeholder survey data collection exemplify specific factors which have a negative effect on meaningful connection to spaces. (further examples available in the database):

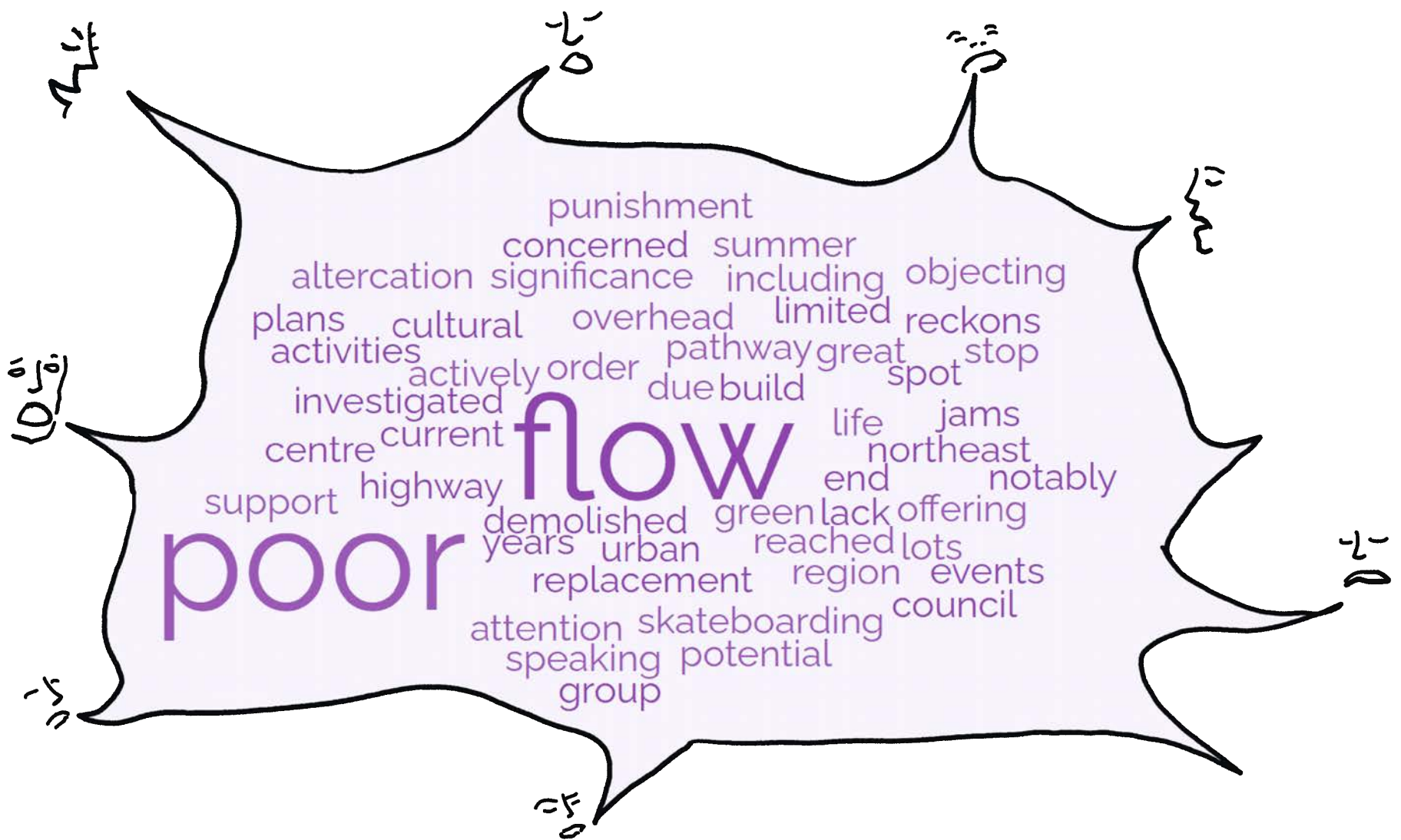


Fig 12: Factors contributing to negative connections to a space.

“The park is due to be demolished in order to build a new green urban pathway as the current overhead highway has reached end of life. A replacement for the park is actively being investigated. This park is of great cultural significance to northeast skateboarding. more so than any other spot in the region despite its very limited offering.” (5 Bridges Plaza, Northeast)

“The skatepark, known by locals as ‘Deppy’ has been the centre of attention for many years with lots of activities including lessons and jams, however, speaking to locals this year they are concerned with a potential lack of support for events this summer. Most notably was an [altercation] with the council that put a stop to lessons last year. [a user] reckons it was punishment for the group objecting plans to extend the play park. The works went ahead and now there is no run-up or run-off area for the skatepark users or any flat tarmac for skating on. They’ve put a sand pit right in the runoff of the skatepark. Essentially, making it more dangerous”. (Folkestone Gardens, London)

heritage
relationship building
conflict
legitimacy
quality
entry/exit

“Park design negatively affects usability - the flow of the park runs in a back-and-forth fashion and is popular with different user groups - who use the park differently. Park would be much improved by sideways expansion changing the flow.” (Bangor Skatepark, Wales)

“Not worth a visit, used as a fire pit and drinking area. Original construction was also of poor quality, connections between transition sections and flat ground concrete very poor.” (Montrose Skatepark, Wigan)

“Unused mainly the coping is bad, it’s an awful layout, the local friends of the park are trying to get rid of the skatepark” (Lozells Skatepark, West Midlands).

“The entire park also has a high fence with barb wire and only 1 gate, looks very intimidating and scary for a beginner.” (Bridges Urban Sports Park, Northern Ireland)

8.5 HOW CONNECTION TO A SPACE IS EXPRESSED BY COMMUNITIES – A SUMMARY

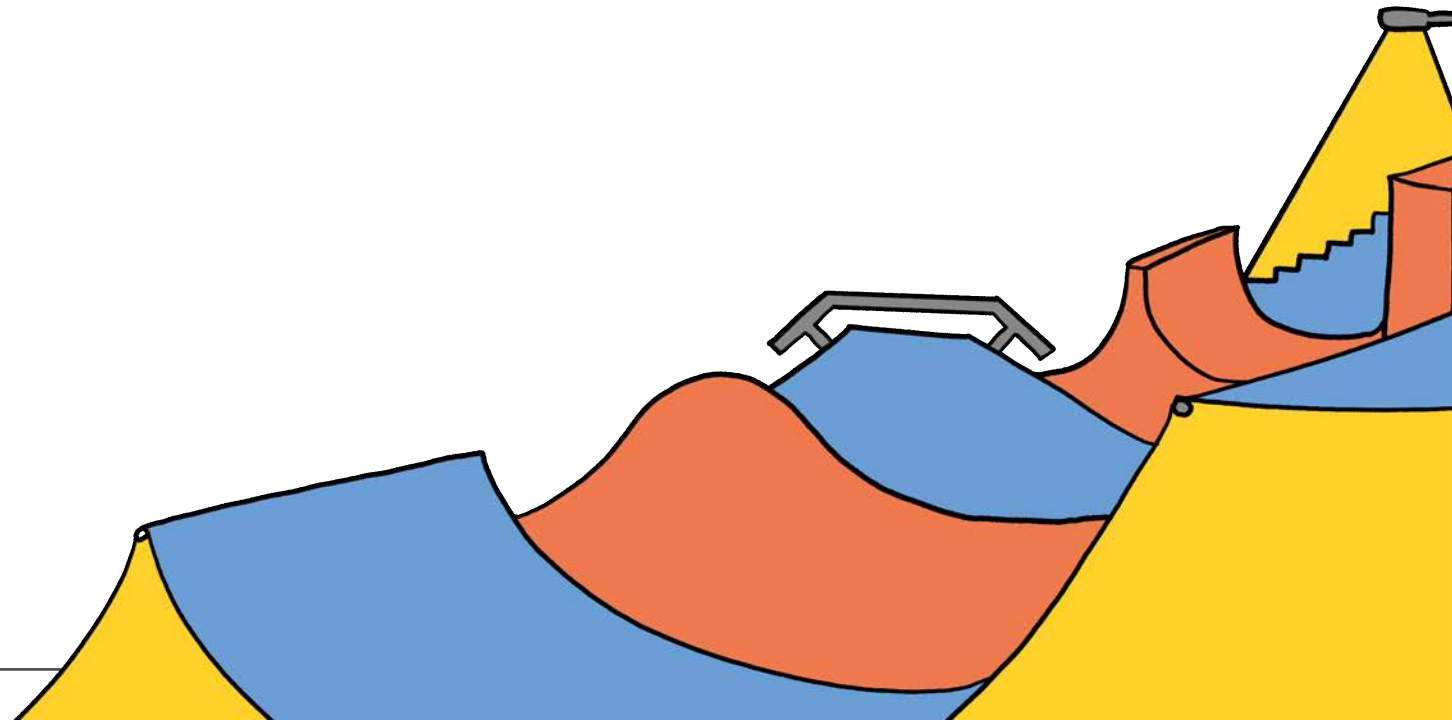
Connection to a space is expressed through a variety of forms across examples provided. These include user groups working to make improvements to a space through their own physical maintenance or through fundraising and advocating for new design and construction. Uniqueness in terms of obstacles and ‘mellowness’ to enable use by skateboarders at different ability levels.

Lack of connection often occurs through poor design, poor construction, lack of maintenance but also due to threats from regeneration schemes and lack of support for community delivered learning offers.

The above examples outline that factors associated with material condition and social activity contribute strongly to the meaningful connections with a space. Since the overall quality index also reflects both of these factors, correlation tests were performed on larger sample sizes to build a more conclusive picture of how these factors reflect overall quality of provision (Fig. 11).

Moderate positive correlations are observed between overall quality and presence of user groups ($r=0.36$, $n=1584$), number of skateable obstacles ($r = 0.45$, $n=1580$), number of non-skate amenities e.g. toilets and cafes etc ($r = 0.4$, $n = 1254$) and parks being predominantly concrete ($r=0.26$, $n = 1557$). A strong positive correlation is found between overall quality and the attendance and frequency of events ($r = 0.6$, $n = 732$) suggesting that active and well-used spaces tend to be deemed substantially higher quality. Modest positive correlations are observed for parks identified as suitable for beginners ($r = 0.23$, $n = 1384$) and for complete beginners specifically ($r = 0.25$, $n = 989$).

In contrast, parks dominated by metal and asphalt surfacing show a modest negative relationship with quality ($r = -0.25$, $n = 1473$). Parks located in priority areas exhibit a weak negative relationship with quality ($r = -0.12$, $n = 357$), albeit with a relatively small sample size. This is expanded on in fig. 13.



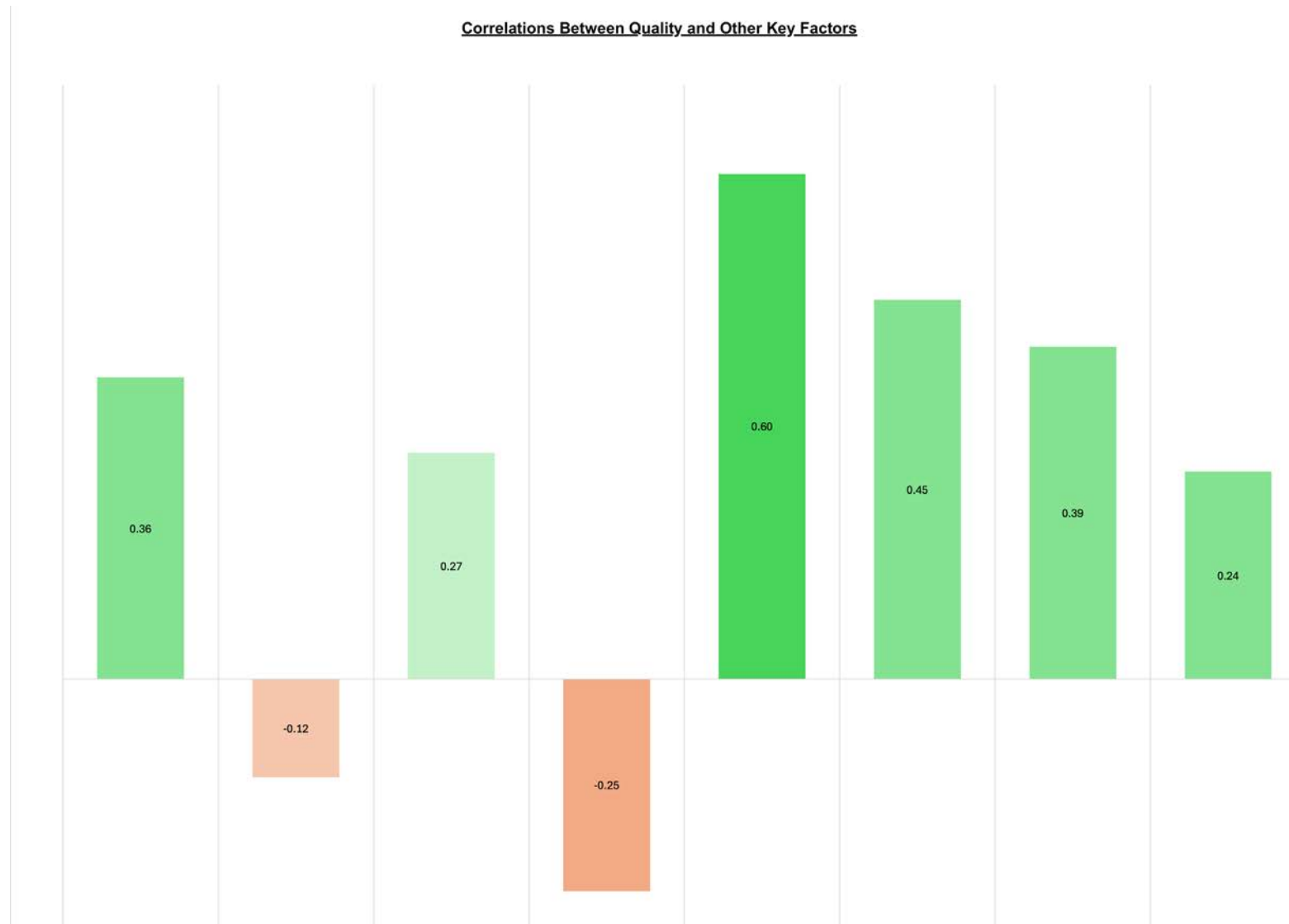


Fig 13: A graph displaying the correlations between a number of key factors and the overall quality index of a skateable space.

Fig. 14: table detailing the connections between these correlations

Variable A	Variable B	Description	Correlation formula	Significance	Meaning	n (sample size)
Overall quality score	User group present	Tests whether parks with organised skateboarding activity tend to have higher overall quality	<u>0.36</u>	Moderate positive	Parks with organised skateboarding groups tend to be noticeably higher quality than parks without organised users.	1584
Overall quality score	Priority area	Tests whether parks located in priority areas differ in quality from those outside priority areas	<u>-0.11</u>	Weak negative	Parks in priority areas tend to be slightly lower quality on average.	357
Overall quality score	Concrete-heavy park (>3/5)	Tests whether predominantly concrete parks tend to score higher on overall quality	<u>0.26</u>	Modest positive	Parks built mainly from concrete tend to be better quality than parks built using other materials.	1557
Overall quality score	Asphalt and metal parks	Tests whether parks dominated by asphalt and metal surfacing tend to score lower on quality	<u>-0.25</u>	Modest negative	Parks made largely from asphalt and metal tend to be lower quality than other parks.	1473
Overall quality score	Attendance and frequency of events	Checks whether the cumulative result of attendance and frequency of events affects overall quality. Only includes parks with an answer to this question.	<u>0.60</u>	Strong positive	Parks with frequent and well-attended events tend to be much higher quality	732
Overall quality score	Number of obstacles	Checks whether parks with a greater number of skateable features are of a higher quality	<u>0.45</u>	Moderate-strong positive	Parks with more obstacles correspond strongly to a higher quality	1580
Overall quality score	Number of non-skate features	Checks whether parks with a greater number of non-skateable features (e.g. toilet, café nearby etc.) are of a higher quality	<u>0.40</u>	Moderate positive	Parks with more non-skate features correspond to a higher quality	1254
Overall quality score	Entry includes 'beginner' AND 'complete beginner'	Checks whether the overall quality is affected by whether the space is suitable for beginning skateboarders	<u>0.23</u>	Modest positive	Parks suitable for beginner skateboarders tend to be better quality overall.	1384
Overall quality score	Entry includes 'complete beginner'	Checks whether the overall quality is affected by whether the space is suitable for complete beginners	<u>0.25</u>	Modest positive	Parks suitable for beginner skateboarders tend to be better quality overall.	989

9. FACTORS AFFECTING SAFETY



9.1 APPROACH

The survey questions enabled monitoring of safety considerations like how far skateable spaces are from public view; lighting and community feedback. Although highly subjective the valuable local knowledge and community input that Regional Associates gathered is important to highlight the diverse factors affecting how safe parks feel. 'Safety' here refers to the risk of crime or other - not the risk of physical injury from a poorly maintained space. We asked for any specific reasons why the space is particularly safe/unsafe. Responses were recorded on a Likert scale and in free text. These responses were followed up through interviews which were transcribed and thematically analysed.

9.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Safety was a common theme emerging in interviews and is a key consideration for stakeholders when creating high-quality skateable spaces.

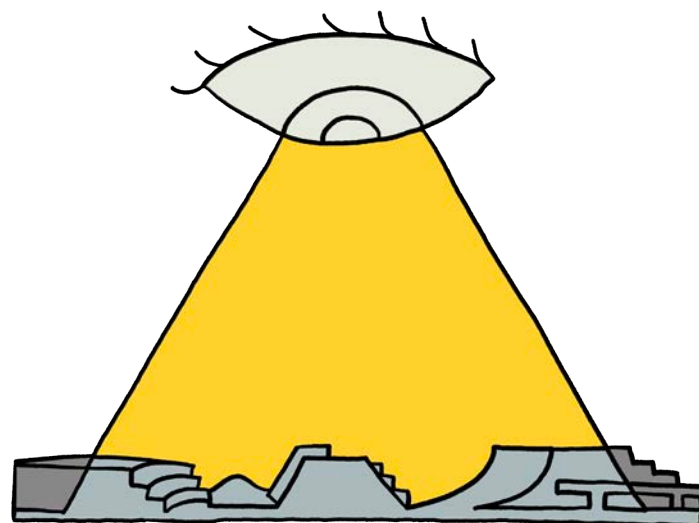
In the Southwest, Yorkshire & Humberside and East of England it was reported that the positioning of parks is a big contributor to their relative safety. Those which are tucked away with poor sight lines and out of town parks are less inviting and feel unsafe. Where the skateable space is out of sight of passers-by they feel less safe. It should be noted that safety also has a temporal dimension because they could score high on some days/nights and low on others.

In the Southeast it was noted that facilities located next to leisure centres are advantageous in terms of safety, toilets, lighting, parking. The proximity to toilets was noted as particularly important to girls and women. In the Southeast this was discussed in terms of safety and as a contributing factor in whether girls and women would use a park or not.

Indoor parks score highly for safety due to their controlled environment, presence of staff, ticketing and a strong sense of community. Community East, The Warehouse and Pioneer were three examples of this noted in the East of England region.

Proximity to play parks showed contrasting experiences in relation to safety concerns. Being next to a play park was a problem for safety cited in several regions. In Greater London this was due to open play parks with no fence around them and no fence around the skate park, so the two blend into each other. Skateboarding and other wheeled sports can be dangerous, and where the skatepark appears to be an extension of the playpark this can seem to extend the space of play for young children without making the inherent dangers evident. However, the presence of families was a positive influence on safety with families often being present in the vicinity of playparks and this caused comments on the presence of families positively influencing safety when in proximity of the skateable space. This indicates that adjacent location is not necessarily a bad thing but that the boundary between skatepark and playpark should be made clear.

Survey research returned 1562 comments that related to safety. The comments below have been chosen to reflect common themes. The contents of section 7 suggest that themes surrounding the welcoming and safe nature of a space overlaps with the meaningful connections fostered there. The following quotes identify specific factors relating to how safe a space feels.



SURVEY NOTES ABOUT FACTORS RELATING TO SAFE SPACES:

"Open space with floodlighting."

"Busy area, very visible."

"CCTV is present, plus a caretaker is present a couple of hours a day."

"Private indoor park providing a safe environment."

"It is an indoor park and offers a monitored safe environment."

"It is a safe rural location, across the road from a public swimming pool and play park, so there is plenty of foot traffic nearby. No lights for evening riding though."

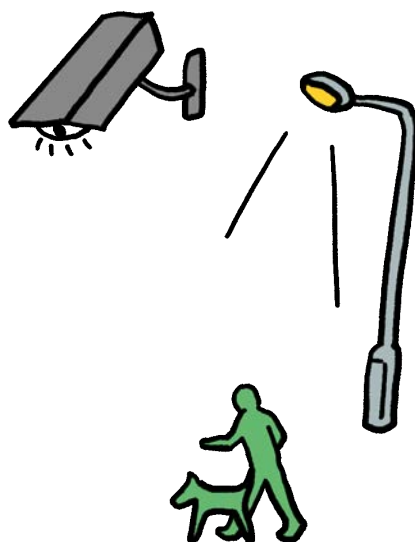
"Close to a school."

"Fully enclosed, visible from road and also well lit."

"Skatepark is fenced making it a little harder for people to snatch bags."

"Nice village, family-friendly park, well-kept skatepark. Community centre next to skatepark."

"The park sits in a well-used recreation ground with play-areas and dog-walkers, crime / vandalism is generally quite low."



SURVEY NOTES ABOUT UNSAFE SPACES:

"It is tucked away in the corner of a field."

"Not lit and next to a play park frequented by mainly unsupervised youths. Whole area is not very visible."

"Rubbish and glass."

"Been incidents of violence, kids throwing rocks."

"Smells bad, signs of anti-social behaviours."

"It's a little secluded, the ramps are not in good condition, tends to be a hangout spot full of broken bottles."



In order to identify common themes and emerging patterns, a word cloud was generated (Fig. 15) using the reasons associates provided for why particular spaces felt safe or unsafe.

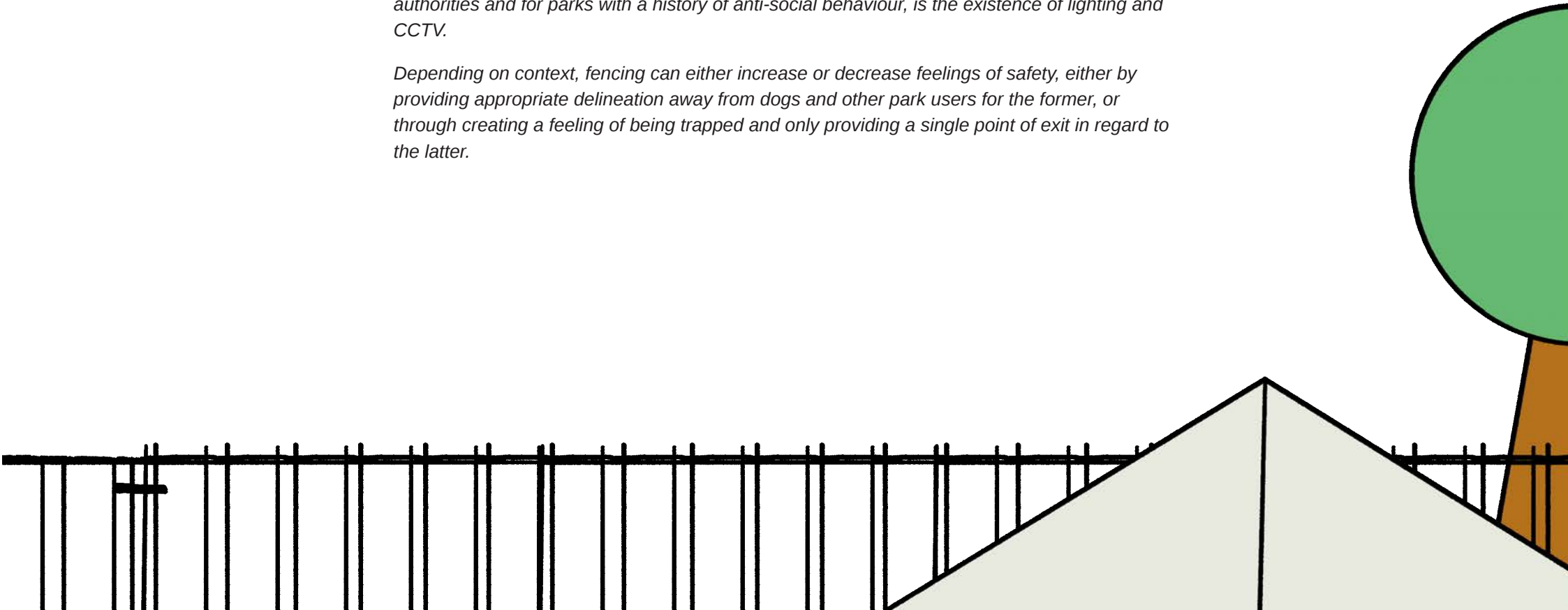


Fig 15: A word cloud showing common safety factors affecting visitor's experience. Most common responses include proximity to other facilities and public thoroughfares.

AUTHOR'S COMMENT

When designing skateparks that are considered safe the most effective consideration is sight lines across and in and out of the space. Sight lines, both consciously and subconsciously provide safety to users, as they gain awareness of others using the space and passers-by, who provide social surveillance to the facility. Another core considerations, especially for local authorities and for parks with a history of anti-social behaviour, is the existence of lighting and CCTV.

Depending on context, fencing can either increase or decrease feelings of safety, either by providing appropriate delineation away from dogs and other park users for the former, or through creating a feeling of being trapped and only providing a single point of exit in regard to the latter.



10. FACTORS AFFECTING HOW WELCOMING A PARK FEELS



10.1 APPROACH

How welcoming a space is consists of a number of diverse factors ranging from a reliable 'hello' when you arrive or a consistent group of welcoming users, to elements like the park's condition. An un-looked-after space could feel less welcoming than one that people care for. Regional Associates took into account diverse factors when deciding how to score spaces using a Likert scale with an option for free text comments in which to note any specific reasons why the space is particularly welcoming or unwelcoming.

10.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The survey research returned 1568 comments relating to whether or not a skateable space was welcoming. Surveys that comment on features that make spaces welcoming refer especially to positive communities and older people who are regular users of spaces making them welcoming. Below are comments relating to factors affecting how welcoming skateable spaces can feel.

"Open space & easily accessible."

"This skatepark has a strong community behind."

"Pretty much every single person who enters the skatepark would be greeted by one of the key crew (those who have been involved with the project from the get-go) very inclusive, skaters are very well behaved when children and parents are around. There is a great etiquette amongst the community to be inclusive to everyone."

"Extremely welcoming, warm, passionate staff."

"It is well maintained, offers lots of different features for beginners and above. The local community uses it a lot and looks after the park."

"Staff on the desk to greet people and strong culture of inclusion."

"Very LGBT friendly, often see trans skaters there, also lots of

women. Have always been made to feel super welcome by all the skaters, no matter how good they are."

"Locals were friendly, happy to include others on the session."

"It's part of a youth centre."

Survey notes about unwelcoming spaces refer to the condition - rubbish/glass, the visibility, other people using the space, the reputation of spaces and the design of spaces and homophobic and/or racist graffiti:

"A lot of glass there."

"Known issues with violence and antisocial behaviour."

"Due to the bad design, it is mainly a hangout for kids. Not very welcoming."

"Not lit, described as 'spooky' (has a large rail tunnel nearby) and is a bit out of the way."

"Despite being in a public park, and next to a 'Family Hub' building, this skatepark is run down, vandalised, secluded and not at all welcoming. It's empty in the daytime, so can be visited, but vandalised benches, ramps, and graffiti & litter indicate poor use."

"Too many children playing on the ramps."

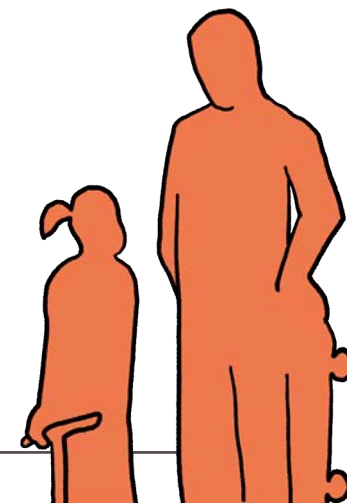
"Rude graffiti, dirt and debris."

"It can be a bit dark and smell of urine."

Some comments that reflect that the time of day impacts how welcoming a space feels:

"Depends on when you go. It's not too bad when kids are at school, otherwise it's a bit of a hangout spot."

"Different cohorts affect this rating. Disrespectful young scooter riders blast music while non-skaters run around the skatepark freely. But in evenings, a strong local skate scene dominates the park."



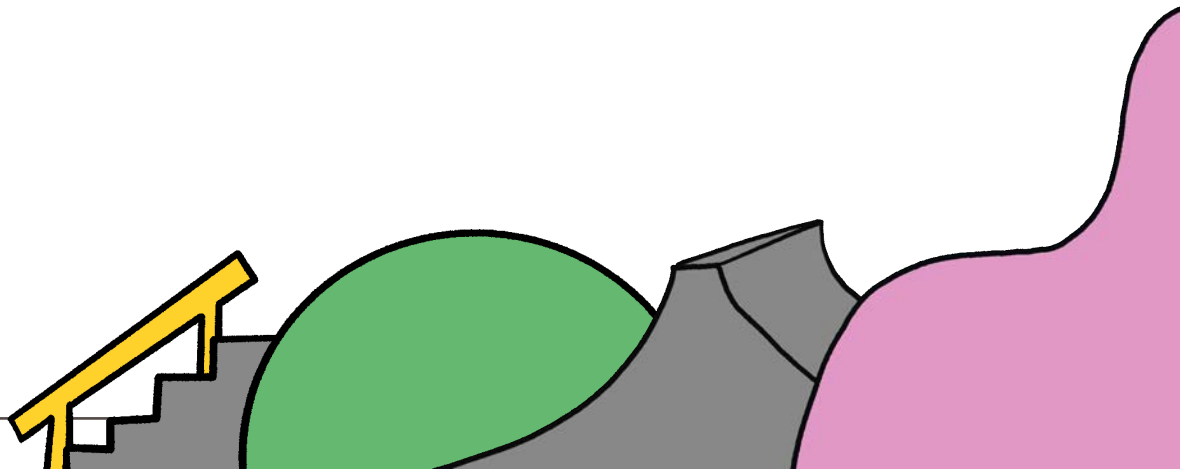
In order to identify common themes and emerging patterns, a word cloud (Fig. 16) was produced, generated using the reasons associates provided for why particular spaces felt welcoming or not.



Fig 16: A word cloud showing common factors affecting visitor's experience of how welcoming the skateable space is perceived to be.

AUTHOR'S COMMENT

It is noted that young people need spaces to hang out. While survey comments occasionally cite this as a negative aspect to feelings of how welcoming a space feels, we also acknowledge that in many circumstances it is totally acceptable for young people to hang out in and around skateparks. Young people may do this for a range of reasons, including the attraction of being close to exciting subcultures. Developing social connections can be seen as a positive aspect of young peoples' development and may speak more broadly to a need for community cohesion/building rather than a negative reason in itself.



11. PRESENCE OF ORGANISED SKATEBOARDING

Organised skateboarding activity as a summary of what the UK wide picture of organised skateboarding looks like, (in all 4 typologies).



11.1 APPROACH

This data was compiled through free text on the survey and through more in-depth exploration through interviews. Aspects of both have been selected and analysed to form an understanding of what organised skateboarding exists, where, how it is supported and by whom.

11.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Organised skateboarding can be understood to include lessons, competitions, sessions aimed at specific demographics, and other formal or informal skateboarding-related events. This was also considered to include activities hosted at skateparks such as live music performances and small-scale community meetups. Survey data shows that, of 467 responses to the question on the “theme of events” (if present), 242 referred to jams, 215 to lessons, and 42 to competitions. The responses also included 56 mentions of live music and 206 references to small-scale community activities such as barbecues and local meetups.

Interviews frequently reflected that the budgets for new skateparks should be allocated both for construction and activation/organised skateboarding, and that the latter is often considered secondary when building a new space. One interviewee even mentioned that there is “nothing left for activation”. The following explores what ‘activation’ may look like and how this can contribute to the overall value of a space, in the form of ‘organised skateboarding’.

Indoor parks have the most consistent organised skateboarding for learning and sessions catering for specific demographics. In Wales, for example, there are lessons at the indoor parks and in schools but little else in terms of ‘organised skateboarding’ in outdoor spaces.

In purpose built outdoor parks there are regional differences. In Yorkshire & Humberside there is a strong scene but less entry level lessons. In the Northeast and East Midlands, they differentiate between organised activity for beginners and the cultivation/maintenance of the existing scene. There is outreach work with local communities in the run up to events and:

- **formal approaches to council and local schools for skateboard coaching events and**
- **scene events which attract the local skateboarding community and are located in existing hubs**



In **East Midlands**, there is a distinction between needs in terms of activity organised for new, beginner communities and different activities for the engagement with more established skaters.

In **London**, it is noted that organised skate lessons, jams and events are valuable for more than simply learning opportunities for newcomers (which is important) but also because they attract non-skating locals and allow for ‘helping’ (mentorship opportunities for younger skateboarders to learn to plan events and

to do coaching). It brings life to a skate park to have a skate school using it and even for the parents because they learn about how to use the skate park.

In the **West Midlands** there is a large appetite for lessons locally; lessons are very much in demand but poorly catered for. The West Midlands also experiences a lack of user groups and a lack of indoor facilities. Few events are noted which appears to link back to a lack of user groups in that region. It was noted in the West Midlands that extending the skills development to support organised skateboarding and skills gaps, the kinds of skill sharing needed to ‘get things done’ would be valuable.

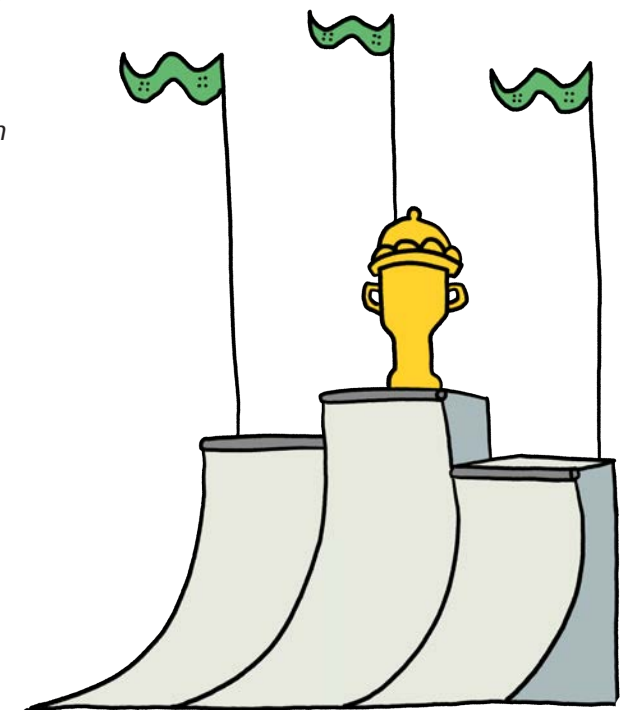
In **London** the recommendation for Skateboard GB to function with communities and support activations was noted with a strategic approach in which there is ‘potential for someone who is a Skateboard GB coach to go and activate specific spaces where potential for developmental growth with communities exists.

AUTHOR'S COMMENT

Whilst competitions are still present nationally, it is noted that over the last 20-30 years there has been a decrease in the number and cultural significance of independently organised skateboard competitions. Since skateboarding's introduction to the Olympics, qualifying events for the national team have been held in an official capacity.

The wider explanation for this relates to the challenges facing the global skate industry, particularly the reduced capacity of brands, shops and distributors to provide product and financial support for prizes, which historically helped incentivise riders from across the UK to travel to events.

Overall quality of parks, including their scale, complexity and construction finish are factors that increase the likelihood of hosting successful popular competitions, which in turn will help support the local scene and heritage of those facilities.



12. SPACES THAT ALIGN WITH THE INTERESTS OF BEGINNERS



12.1 APPROACH

Using data from surveys and interview responses we could see how many spaces catered for the needs of beginners and explore correlations in terms of factors such as materials, presence of user groups and condition that impacted on responses.

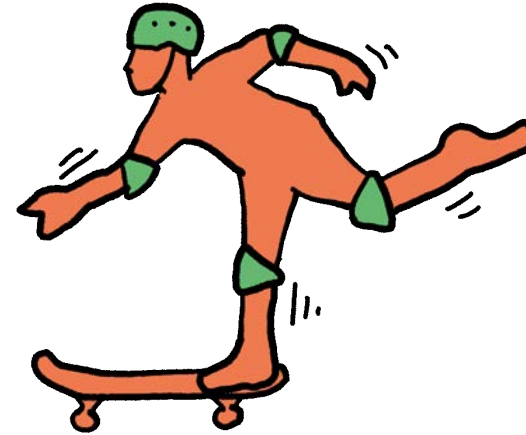
12.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

We can see that the range of obstacles at varied heights along with 'good flow' enable usage by both beginner and more experienced riders. Comments below from the free text in surveys highlight these points.

"Nevertheless, the metal-pre fab park, albeit a somewhat useable and useful space for beginners, lacked the necessary provisions for a more advanced skater or one seeking to progress beyond learning the basics (but has a decent flatground area to learn how to push as well as different sized/steepness banks and ramps). The new park to be opened soon will be a major improvement in almost every respect." (Over Skatepark, East of England)

"Great for beginners as many smaller areas and some adjustable height rails, but also fun for more advanced." (Revolution Skatepark, Southeast)

"Hereford Skatepark is a brilliant example of a modern skatepark. A wide range of obstacles that suits everyone from beginners to experts there's something for everyone both street and transition" (Hereford Skatepark, Southwest)



"The design (and the DIY add ons) caters to and allows for early learning and progression yet also has large obstacles (ie a range of handrails and hubbas) that cater to extremely high-level skaters such as Joe Hinson." (Trumpington Skatepark, East of England)

"The metal mini ramp that used to be in this park has been replaced with a concrete bowl with a couple of different sections. It is good for beginners." (Buntingford Skatepark, East of England)

"The park has a 'fun' flow to it and is a good space for beginners to learn how to roll around transition and for those more experienced and advanced transition skaters" (Haddenham East of England)

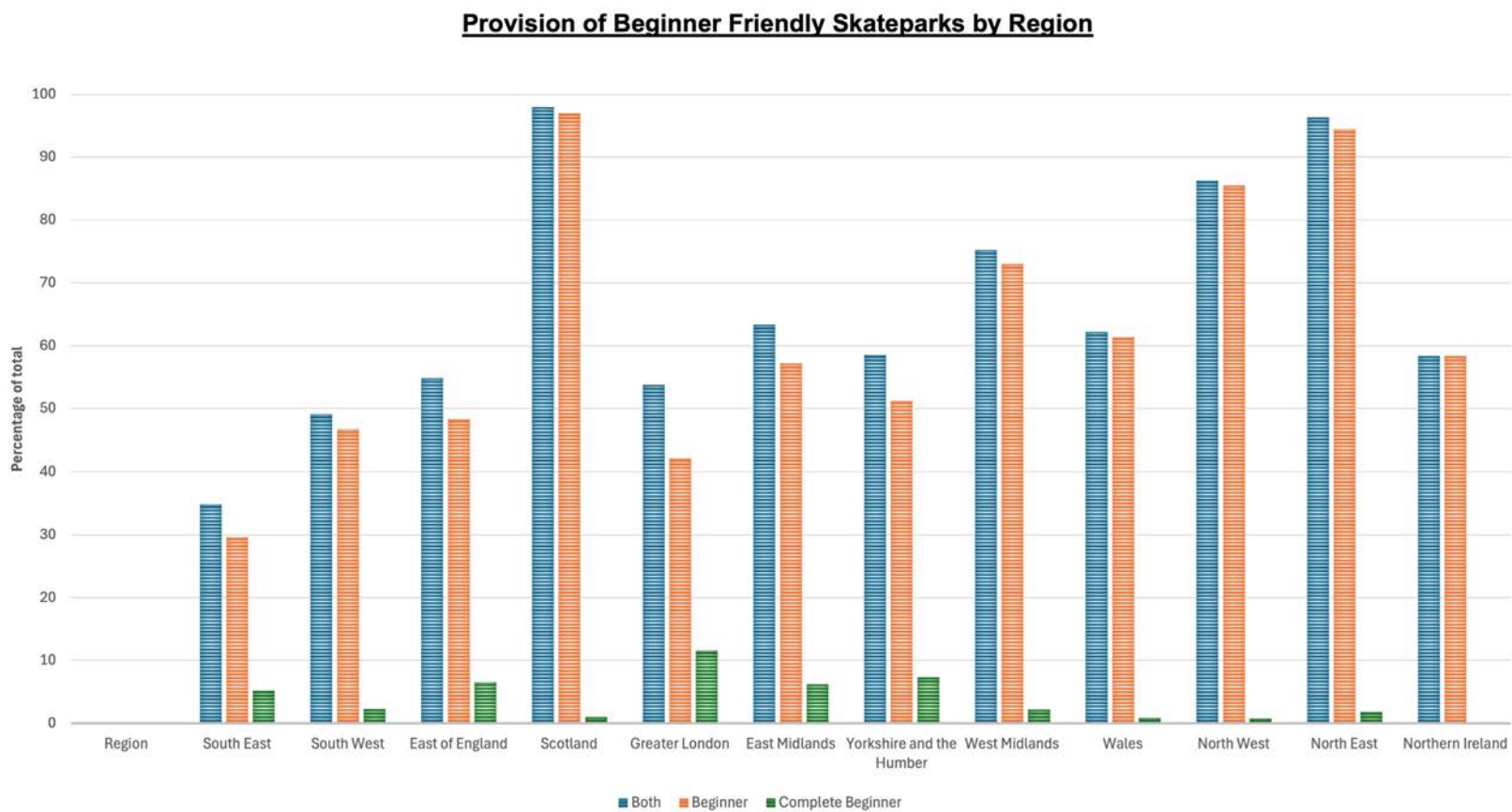


Fig 17: A bar chart showing that skateable spaces cater well for beginners across the UK.

AUTHOR'S COMMENT

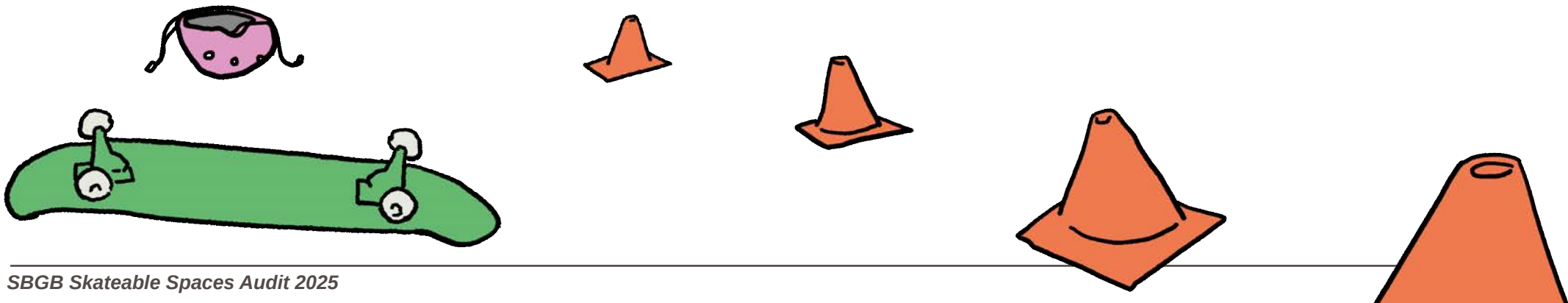
The interests of beginners and the most requested skatepark features are cited across many council run skatepark briefs for new parks, as well as recorded at consultations with beginners. Four features of skatepark design consideration comes up in most briefs for 'beginner friendly spaces', these are:

Ample flat ground – the most impactful consideration for total beginners is an area with no ramps, that allows users to learn to push, and get comfortable turning and getting on and off the board. Although not strictly a skatepark element, this a key consideration.

Accessible features – in order for beginners to develop skills in an environment that feel comfortable, beginners often request features with a low barrier to entry. This may include a low ledge, manual pad, kickers, A frame, ride on slappy kerb, pump bump, micro mini and quarter pipes with mellow radii, often under 1m high.

Separate zones – providing space set apart from the main area of a skatepark for beginners is a great way to provide a space in the interest in beginners. This approach requires certain space and budget

Space for progression – delivering a space for progression involves a range of features, that increase in difficulty. This allows users to learn on one element before moving on to the next.



13. CONCLUSION AND KEY FINDINGS



13.1 KEY FINDINGS

This research gives an overall picture of skateable spaces across the UK, and what impact the quality of the provision has on the skateboarding community. There is a large variety of skateable spaces seen across regions, in terms of condition, material and typology. Findings from the report are intended to inform approaches taken by local government as well as how provision relates to strategic investment in new facilities from funding bodies.

Key Findings were found across eleven key areas of research, as set out by Skateboard GB.

- 1. Number of skateable spaces in the UK
- 2. Regional spread
- 3. Sport England Priority Areas
- 4. Progression and alignment with international performance interests
- 5. Summary of usage
- 6. Health and condition
- 7. Meaningful connections between space and community
- 8. Factors affecting safety
- 9. Factors affecting how welcoming spaces feel
- 10. Presence of organised skateboarding
- 11. Spaces that align with the interests of beginners

NUMBER OF SKATEABLE SPACES IN THE UK

Our data shows that there are 1923 open skateable spaces in the UK in 2025, across all 12 regions and typologies.

REGIONAL SPREAD

Regionally, the Southeast, Southwest and East of England have the most skateable spaces by far, with Scotland closely following. Northeast, Northwest, Wales and Yorkshire and the Humber have the least, as shown below.

• Southeast	267
• Southwest	261
• East of England	292
• Scotland	199
• Greater London	147
• East Midlands	161
• West Midlands	137
• Yorkshire and the Humber	123
• Wales	119
• North West	124
• North East	54
• Northern Ireland	12

SPORT ENGLAND PRIORITY AREAS

We found that many UK skateable spaces exist in the priority areas outlined by Sport England. Across these areas, there is a small tendency for overall quality scores to be lower than non-priority areas.

PROGRESSION AND ALIGNMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE INTERESTS

It was found that many spaces are suitable for progression across beginner levels. Barriers for beginners are often seen as cultural, such as presence of user groups. However, barriers for progression to advanced and elite levels are more closely related to material provision. This is especially evident in relation to Olympic standard facilities and more specifically Olympic qualifying, event-ready facilities, where the UK's provision falls short. No single park in the UK meets all criteria needed for street, park and logistic requirements needed for an Olympic qualifying event. In addition to meeting minimum standards, anecdotally, elite riders require facilities that go even further in their provision, in order to ready them for the highest level of competition.

SUMMARY OF USAGE

Indoor parks are safest, weather resilient and offer opportunities for progression. But less than 5% of skateable spaces are indoor and the cost of entry is prohibitive to many. For outdoor parks, factors including location, time of day, presence of community, user groups and condition affect usage. Condition alone is not a determining factor. Parks with modular construction methods (particularly metal / timber) with an asphalt base are under-used and show a greater propensity for anti-social behaviour, partly due to the void spaces under ramps. This tends to cause abandonment, noted by observation of broken glass and litter which affects their use. Skateable spaces in city centres tend to be of higher quality, conversely remote locations with lack of transport links leads to limited accessibility. Time of day is a significant factor in the way a skateable space is used and by whom with the two hours after the school day being the busiest for children and families. Adults tend to use parks during the day and especially at weekends.

HEALTH AND CONDITION

Local authorities who involve user groups at an early stage in the design and planning of skateable spaces are more likely to produce high quality and meaningful facilities. This creates local buy-in and sense of ownership, which has an impact on

long term governance, maintenance and activation. When investigating health and condition across typologies and regions, we found the following:

- Parks with organised skateboarding user groups tend to be noticeably higher quality than parks without organised users.
- Parks built from concrete tend to be better quality than parks built using other materials.
- Parks that are built using metal and asphalt tend to be lower quality than other parks.
- Parks with frequent and well attended events tend to be much higher quality.
- Parks with more obstacles tend to correspond strongly to a higher quality.
- Parks with more non-skate features tend to correspond to a higher quality.
- Parks that are suitable for beginning skateboarders tend to be better quality overall.

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SPACE AND COMMUNITY

We gathered hundreds of stories about facilities that have been co-produced by local communities, and meaningful relationships that have developed between the spaces and the people who use and protect them. Communities don't just use these spaces; they co-produce and celebrate them. We identified the need to involve community groups in early planning stages and to support user groups for the long term to maximise the benefits they bring to skateable spaces.

FACTORS AFFECTING SAFETY

Where user groups are active, skateable spaces are safer. User groups also tend to have a positive impact on maintenance and rider progression. Across the data set, proximity of playparks impacts on safety positively and negatively. The presence of families makes skateparks safer but not having a clear distinction between spaces can be dangerous. Fencing can be useful but only if there are multiple entry and exit points. Parks located on the edge of conurbations and out of sight from passers-by are under used due to safety concerns and reports of anti-social behaviour.

FACTORS AFFECTING HOW WELCOMING A SPACE FEELS

Communities living locally who are actively involved in their local skateparks enhance the ongoing maintenance of spaces, the safety and feeling of being 'welcome'. Spaces feel particularly welcoming when there are active, intergenerational communities who are regular users. Spaces that are in poor condition, often with rubbish and glass present, tend to be seen as unwelcoming. Other affecting factors include being out of sight of passers-by which creates limited visibility. In certain locations, the perceived reputation of spaces and presence of offensive graffiti had an impact of how welcoming a space feels.

PRESENCE OF ORGANISED SKATEBOARDING

User groups are often responsible for providing lessons, events (such as jams and competitions, loaning of equipment, meetups and other learning and community opportunities. Entry level skateboarders are supported through these activities. This said, interviews note that unless there is an active scene in the area, opportunities to engage with and be absorbed into broader skateboard culture is limited. The closure of local skateshops was identified as a barrier to these entry points.

Interviews frequently reflect that the budgets for new skateparks are not always allocated both for construction and activation of organised skateboarding. This impacts on the skatepark's usage and community as well progression and support for newcomers.

DIYs are simultaneously the products and producers of organised skateboarding. They account for a very specific and especially impactful form of skateable space and associated organised activity. Users of DIY spaces not only take part in skateboarding, but often directly contribute to the maintenance, culture and design of the space. All of these activities contribute to collective and individual enrichment

SPACES THAT ALIGN WITH THE INTERESTS OF BEGINNERS

Alongside the community factors outlined above, the range of obstacles at varied heights along with 'good flow' enable usage by both beginner and more experienced riders. Areas of flat ground on the periphery of spaces are valuable for complete beginners and experienced riders alike. Anecdotally, beginners cite lower level and mellow transition radii are more inviting. Appropriate spacing and a smooth finish are the basic requirements for a beginner friendly facility. It should be noted that spaces can be both suitable for beginners and advanced users simultaneously. If designed properly, one does not necessarily have to detract from the other, it is often how riders use the space that reflects their ability.

13.2 CLOSING THOUGHTS

The project team are pleased to have been given the opportunity to undertake such an unprecedented body of work, working closely alongside regional stakeholders across the UK as well as the team at Skateboard GB.

This is the first comprehensive assessment of its kind in which facilities, use and users' perceptions around safety and condition have been considered alongside the ability of spaces to cater for competition standards.

- Data produced from the report shows a range in national provision whilst simultaneously, the research outlines the significance of the relationship between local communities and the spaces that are meaningful to them.
- Innovating a methodology for data capture and analysis has produced a large data set providing empirical evidence to support claims of significance and value.

The research, and particularly its methodology, has wide reaching significance in that the approach taken can be adopted and reproduced in other countries, for further collective benefit.

Findings from the report can advise on the governance and design of skateable spaces across the UK. This use includes impacting strategic investment in new facilities, the refurbishment of existing facilities as well as providing appropriate support for communities associated with different types of skateable spaces.

We hope that further use and study of the data produced by this report is carried out, to further the positive impact of the research.



SkateboardGB

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About Skateboard GB

Skateboard GB is the National Governing Body for skateboarding in England and the home of Olympic skateboarding in Great Britain.

Skateboard GB exists to give skateboarders the opportunity to “Skate More, Skate Better” and works to ensure that they are skater-focused in everything they do, providing leadership, support, empowerment and facilitation for skateboarding in the UK.

Skateboard GB celebrate and champion everything that is positive about skateboarding’s heritage and culture and work with the skateboarding community to develop more opportunities and better environments to skate, inspiring future generations of skateboarders as a result of success on the world stage.

About Goldsmiths

Goldsmiths, University of London, is a progressive university that aims to forge positive change in the world through all that we do.

Goldsmiths has fostered an innovative and enquiring spirit since we welcomed our first students as a University 120 years ago in 1905.

Around 7,500 students at our campus in the heart of New Cross in South East London study undergraduate, postgraduate and teacher training courses across the arts and humanities, social sciences, cultural studies, psychology, computing, entrepreneurial business, law and management.

Opportunity and equity are at the heart of everything we do. We’re ranked as the UK’s top university for student academic progression, are among the top three in the UK for Art and Design and considered a world leading university for study in nine subject areas.

Goldsmiths has a thriving research culture with nearly four fifths of our research rated either internationally excellent or world-leading.

From artists and creatives to teachers and practitioners, our graduates shape culture and society. Nearly a quarter of Turner Prize winners are Goldsmiths alumni and notable graduates include artist and filmmaker Sir Steve McQueen, writer Bernardine Evaristo, artist Sir Antony Gormley and Charli XCX music producer A.G. Cook.

www.gold.ac.uk

About Betongpark

Betongpark are a design and construction company who specialise in concrete skateparks and other skateable spaces. With offices in London and Oslo, the team is made up of lifelong skaters who work passionately to create unique spaces for skateboarding.

Formed of a multi-disciplinary team, Betongpark are comprised of landscape architects, engineers, construction experts and concrete finishers. Working across the public and private sector, Betongpark is recognised as one of Europe’s industry leaders in skatepark design and construction.

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