



# Media Release

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## **TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF PADDLING POOLS**

Health and safety guidance is forcing a temporary closure of the district's three paddling pools. Following new guidance on health and safety issues surrounding swimming pools (which includes paddling pools), the council's parks, environmental and health and safety officers have been looking more closely at the issue of paddling pools and the way they are operated.

In carrying out renewed risk assessments following new guidance from the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (ISRM), the council has had to concur that the safety framework for paddling pools must include them being staffed at all times they are available to the public.

The paddling pools in Valley Gardens, Harrogate, Bebra Gardens, Knaresborough and Borrage Green, Ripon will be affected.

Councillor Mrs Pat Jones, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Amenity Services, said: “Although our paddling pools are tested twice daily for chlorine level and drained down and cleaned once a week, we are now having to consider having someone on site during the day to ensure that there is no risk to the users. One of the safety criteria relates to whether children under the age of 15 have unaccompanied access. It isn't possible to close or fence off these pools so the answer has to be that yes they do have access.

“We have contacted other councils and those who have retained their paddling pools tell us that they have staff cover on site all of the time the pools are available for public use. Outside of this time they are drained. This fits in with our interpretation of the guidance. We are now looking at how much it will cost the council to have staff on site and to drain and refill the pools on a daily basis and are looking to see if that can be resourced so that the pools are open for the summer holidays. As a safety precaution the pools will remain closed until this matter can be resolved.” ENDS