

A Spotlight Report

How people feel about living in Medway

A spotlight report focusing on **Rainham** and
Twydall.



August 2024

Our health and wellbeing can be affected by things that we experience in everyday life.

There is increasing interest in these wider determinants of health and Healthwatch Medway wanted to understand what positively and negatively impacts the health and wellbeing of people in Medway.

Medway has a range of diverse settlements, from isolated rural villages and hamlets on the peninsula to densely populated urban towns.

This report is part of a series of reports that will be posted monthly in 2024 with each covering a different area of Medway. As of August 2024, these reports together contain 313 responses. You can read our other reports [here](#).

In August 2024, we engaged with **40** residents living across **Rainham (31)** and **Twydall (9)**.

Healthwatch Medway will share this report with health and social care services to help build an understanding of how the areas where people live impact on them, and how we can work together with services to improve Medway residents' quality of life.

This report summarises what we have heard.

Methodology

Using a semi-structured interview, we approached people face-to-face in local community areas.

Participants were selected by a randomised sample of who was out and about in their local area on the days we were engaging.

Factors that contribute to feeling positive about where you live

40 people told us why they like where they live:

83%

of Rainham and Twydall locals told us that they **like** where they live.

43%

mentioned that the **local community** has a positive impact on them liking where they live.

“There's a close-knit community, lots of people understand each other. The ones who know each other support each other, which is good for wellness.”

35%

of residents said they like the **local amenities** in the area.

“It has all the local good amenities, good transport links, good schools, churches. There are at least seven tattoo parlours and an equal amount of accountants, not too sure if they are linked, but great to have local businesses and support artists.”

30%

of locals mentioned that **convenience** is a positive attribute of the area.

“The convenience. It's near the train station, shops and buses. It's good because I don't drive.”

28%

mentioned the availability of local **green spaces** to be a positive feature of the area.

“There are some great open spaces. My dog particularly likes Motney Hill, Kings Thrift Fields. The benefit is the ability to experience sunshine, fresh air without having to travel too far. Mentally, it is positive to get moving in the mornings and physically good to get out and get the old joints moving.”

23%

mentioned the benefit of the **quietness** of the area.

“It's nice and quiet as I live quite near the countryside. I've got dogs so I walk them every day. It's just a little bit quieter.”

20%

mentioned the benefit of the **safety** of the area.

"It's quite safe here too - we've only been burgled once and that was out garage. There's a council estate at the bottom of the road, so it goes with the territory."

15%

of locals mentioned the **familiarity of the local area** contributes to them liking where they live.

"I was born and bred in Twydall, which is Upper Rainham, so I don't really know any different."

13%

of residents mentioned the good **public transport** is a positive factor of the area.

"It's more convenient now with the improved bus service. The area used to get cut off, but now they've brought additional buses into the service."

13%

mentioned the benefit of the **housing** in the area.

"I like my house - we have a lovely, big garden. I love my home."

8%

of residents mentioned **local events** have a positive effect on them liking the area.

"Living around here I felt close to a lot of services for my baby when he was born, like access to parks and swimming and there was always free stuff on at the library. That definitely had a direct impact on my well-being.."

5%

of residents mentioned that they like **nothing** about the area.

"Nothing. The goodness is gone for me. It used to be lovely."

3%

mentioned that the **accessibility of the area** has a positive impact on them liking where they live.

"I have lived here for quite some time. Everything is central for me. I've got dementia and I need to be close to home, know where I am and how I can get back. I sometimes lose my memory, but I know where I am when I come here and how to get home. That is comforting for me."

3%

of residents mentioned the **aesthetic** of the area is a positive factor.

"It's a pretty place."

Factors that contribute to feeling negative about where you live

40 people told us what they do not like about where they live:

18%

of locals told us that they **do not like** where they live.

28%

mentioned the negative impact of the **community**.
"Some of the people, pretentious middle-class Wigmore people in particular. Bit snobby and protective of the boundary."

25%

of locals mentioned the negative impact of **crime** and **anti-social behaviour** in the local area.

Below are the the themes that they mentioned.

10%

said they do not always feel **safe**.

"It's not safe, there are a few paedophiles about - one was arrested and let go just last week. It makes you feel scared when you have grandchildren, it's scary."

mentioned the impact of the use of **drugs and alcohol** in the area.

8%

"I do like it, but it is going downhill. You never used to get the down-and-outs, the alcoholics, the druggies just hanging around; you never used to."

8%

of people specifically mentioned **robberies** as a source of negatively impacting on how they feel about living in the area.

"I got mugged the other day on the church path. they took my purse and everything."

5%

mentioned issues with **homelessness** in the area.

"There are lots of homeless people and beggars."

3%

mentioned incidents with **knife crime**.

"You can see the old ladies who are out are scared of them, they see the shoplifting and feel unsafe. Apparently, in the Twydall branch, people went in there with machetes, but we are just doing our jobs."

3%

of residents mentioned **gangs** as a negative of the area.

"A lot of people are coming down from London and now there are gangs here. You're always looking over your shoulder."

18%

spoke about the **lack of amenities** in the area.
“Now the shops are closing. I miss the fact there is no greengrocers and there is not a clothes shop.”

15%

mentioned the negatives of the lack of **parking** available where they live.
“ Now you have to pay to go shopping – it's disgraceful to have to pay for parking when you go to the shops and are already giving them your money.”
Parking is pretty dire and the flats don't have parking.

15%

spoke about the **development of new housing** in the area being a negative.
“They are building a lot of houses and it's becoming very built up. The services are becoming unavailable because of this like the GP, the hospital is too small.”

15%

mentioned **traffic** as a negative.
“I like where we live, but we live on Station Road and the traffic is a nightmare. The problem is we can only get out of Rainham one of two ways and there is always a lot of traffic and lots of roadworks. We can't be spontaneous. We have to think ahead, plan ahead – and it's worse when there are roads closed.”

13%

of residents said they dislike **nothing** about the area they live in.
“I don't think there is anything as I have everything I need.”

10%

mentioned **issues with the roads** in the area was a negative.
“It's horrible. It's badly run and the logistics here are terrible. They keep building new houses and not fixing roads.”

10%

mentioned a **lack of police** in the area.
“They used to have wardens, which made a difference.”
“ I will not come out at night. There are not enough police about.”

8%

spoke about **urban decay**.
“The shopping are could be a bit better, vamped up, look better than what it is.”

8%

mentioned the **lack of activities** locally.

“Boredom, there's a lack of things to do. They need more tourist things to bring people in.”

“It could have more stuff to do.”

8%

of people also spoke about the **issues with health services**.

“They're bringing so many people in that services are being clogged up. They need to build more services to accommodate the new people. The services are so stretched and I've waited over a year for an appointment.”

5%

spoke about their **housing**.

“There should be a rent cap on private renting, it'll give people more opportunity to get on the property ladder.”

5%

mentioned issues with **public transport** negatively impacting how they feel about the area.

“The bus links are terrible - they are expensive and irregular.”

“The buses could be free.”

3%

of people also spoke about:

Cost of living

“You see people just walking out with bags full of stuff, yelling that things cost too much. Things are definitely getting worse, you see more of this happening with the cost of living.”

Air pollution

“The pollution and the traffic congestion.”

Employment

“There is a lack of opportunities here. I want to work and I can work, but it's the lack of opportunities.”

Green spaces

“We need more open spaces - free and good to get some fresh air.”

Noise

“The train tracks can make it difficult to sleep, they keep me awake, especially when it's the rail replacement; I think they hit our cat too.”

Involvement in community groups and activities

We engaged with **40** Rainham and Twydall residents out in the community.

Those involved

13

people that we spoke to **were involved** in at least one community group.

Of those:

84%

believe liking where you live and being involved in community groups **has an impact** on your health and wellbeing.

92%

like the area that they live in.

15%

do not want to get involved in anything else apart from the groups they are already involved in.

An insight into those attending community groups in Rainham and Twydall:

Out of the **13** residents that **were involved** in community groups:

92%

identified as **White British**.

62%

identified as **male**.

62%

identified as having a **disability** or long term **health condition**.

38%

were aged **65 and over**.

8%

identified as **carers**.

Those not involved

27 were not involved in community groups.

Of those:

85% believe liking where you live and being involved in community groups **has an impact** on your health and wellbeing.

78% like where they live.

33% do not want to get involved in community groups.

An insight into those not attending community groups in Walderslade and Lordswood:

Out of the **27** that were not involved in community groups.

93% identified as **White British**.

59% identified as **female**.

48% identified as having a **disability** or long term **health condition**.

33% were aged **65 and over**.

15% identified as **carers**.

7% identified as having a **primary language other than English**.

Community Groups Mentioned:

Of the **40** responses from Rainham and Tywdall residents, these are the local groups that were mentioned.

- Children and adults football teams
- Saint Augustine's
- Youth rugby
- Rainham Wives Club
- Volunteering at Fort Amherst
- Volunteering at Slough Fort
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Carers First
- Medway Voluntary Action
- Gillingham Street Angels
- Sunlight Development Trust
- Historic Chatham Dockyard
- Nucleus Arts
- MAPS, Centre co
- charity shop as a volunteer
- Short mat bowls
- St Margret's Church Craft Group



Benefits of being involved in community groups

Out of the **13** people who said they are involved in community groups:

85%

said that being involved in a community group has an **impact on their health and wellbeing**.

54%

mentioned that involvement in community groups has a **positive social impact**.

"Makes me feel happy, get to meet new people and do new things. Socialising makes me feel good."

38%

mentioned that involvement in community groups **benefits** their **physical health**.

"It gets me out of the house and gives me something to do."

23%

mentioned that getting involved has a **positive** impact on their **mental health**.

"I started this group not long after my husband died and there were a number of horrible things going on. I was quite suicidal at the time. I live alone and this group helps to get me out and keeps me social."

15%

mentioned the **positives** of learning **new skills**.

"[It] allowed me to improve my personal and professional development."

8%

mentioned the **positive** impact on the **community**.

"Giving seldom heard groups a voice, appreciating their contributions to the society, and learning about different cultures."

Barriers to joining community groups

We asked people whether they faced any barriers to joining community groups or getting involved with anything locally. Out of **38** respondents:

26%

of respondents mentioned a **lack of spare time** to get involved in local groups.

"We own a business so we don't have much spare time, we're pretty tied up with that."

26%

said that there was **nothing** they wished to be involved in.

"I am a bit anti-people. I can't be bothered, to be honest. There's nothing missing in my life, I don't feel like I am missing out."

13%

of respondents mentioned a **lack of information** about local groups.

"Yeah, boxing or something sporty like MMA or judo or Taekwondo or Tai chi. Yes because I have nothing to do all day. If I was involved in a group I would do that all day. You can become professional too, it takes lots of hard work and training, but how can I do that when I don't know where the group is. I just have nothing to do and it causes me problems, I have nowhere to release my stress."

11%

of locals spoken to mentioned that their **physical health** impacts on their ability to get involved.

"I have been asked to join a local group, but I have had health problems and I am only just getting back to myself."

8%

of locals mentioned **money** being a barrier to them getting involved in local groups.

"We live not too far from the new Cozenton park. It looks good, but I am not sure about the costs to join or go there. To be honest, I am not sure I can afford it, which is a shame."

5%

of locals spoken to mentioned that their **mental health** impacts on their ability to get involved.

"I would like to advocate for my situation. I get very anxious and nauseous. I'm going to talking therapies I'm always stressed. I go out for walks to ease my anxiety with my friends."

5%

mentioned a **lack of amenities**.

"There are a lack of neuro-diversity facilities and a lack of awareness from people. A lack of support and understanding. It makes me withdraw into myself. Neurologically yes I think it has an impact on me. I know people to talk to but, I was at a point once where I was considering jumping onto the tracks of Rainham train station due to a lack of understanding with my family and a lack of support for neuro-diversity. At the Hornbeam Centre you can build Scalextric and train sets."

3%

spoke about **public transport** being a barrier to getting involved.

"I can't think of anything [I would like to get involved in,] but my barrier would be transport."

3%

of respondents spoke about the **accessibility** of the area.

"I would like to have a job in my area but no one would take me on because of my disabilities."

Two people did not respond to this question.



Summary

92%

of people that **are involved in community groups** like where they live, whereas out of the people who are not involved in community groups, **78%** like where they live.

85%

of the 18 people who said they were involved in community groups believe that **being involved** has an **impact on their health and wellbeing**.

54%

of respondents who **are involved in community groups** find that it has a **positive social impact**.

43%

of locals mentioned that the **community** in the area contributes to people liking where they live.

33%

of respondents that are not involved in local groups **do not want to get involved**.

26%

of respondents mentioned a **lack of spare time** to get involved in local groups.

25%

of locals mentioned the negative impact of **crime and anti-social behaviour** in the local area.

35 Participants – Profile Breakdown

		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	19	48%
	Female	21	53%
Transgender		0	
Age	0-15	0	
	16-24	6	15%
	25-34	5	13%
	35-44	2	5%
	45-54	7	18%
	55-64	6	15%
	65-74	7	18%
	75-84	5	13%
	85-94	1	3%
	95-99	1	3%
Sexuality	Heterosexual	36	90%
	Bisexual/ Homosexual	2	5%
	Prefer not to say	2	5%

		Number	Percentage
Ethnicity	English/Welsh/ Scottish/Northern Irish/British	37	93%
Any other White background	Latvian	1	3%
	Indian	1	3%
Any Other Ethnic Origin	Pakistani/Gypsy/ Roma/Irish Traveller/White & Asian	1	3%
	Prefer not to say	0	
First Langage	English	37	93%
	Punjabi	1	3%
	Bengali	1	3%
	Latvian	1	3%
	Prefer not to say	0	



		Number	Percentage
Carer		5	13%
	Young Carer	1	3%
Do you have a disability or health condition?		21	53%
	Long term health condition	14	35%
	Physical disability	7	18%
	Learning disability	6	15%
	Mental health condition	7	18%
	Prefer not to say	0	
Neurodiversity	ADHD	4	10%
	Autism	4	10%
	Dyspraxia	1	3%
	Tourettes	1	3%

If you would like to chat with us about the report you can reach us through the following routes:



Online:
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By Text:
Text us on 07525 861 639. By
texting 'NEED BSL', Healthwatch's
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