

A Spotlight Report

How people feel about living in Medway

A spotlight report focusing on **Hempsted,**
Wigmore and **Parkwood.**



October 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 October 2024, these reports together contain 401 responses. You can read our other reports [here](#).

In October 2024, we engaged with **34** residents living in **Hempsted** (6), **Wigmore** (14) and **Parkwood** (14).

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

34 people told us why they like where they live:

94%

of Hempsted, Wigmore and Parkwood locals told us that they **like** where they live.

59%

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

"The people, I'm comfortable here. They support me and know that I'm there to support them."

32%

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

"The shops are close and the healthy living centre is close. Hempstead is just up the road. Being close to things is great because I don't have a car at the moment, so I have to walk everywhere."

21%

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

"There's a lot of retired people around here and not a lot of children. It's quiet. If you live in a nice place it's got to make a difference, if it's nice and quiet."

21%

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

"I like the focal points like the High Street and the shops here, is just a bit more upmarket than other places in Medway. The schools are good and the education is good."

18%

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

"It feels safe."

"It could be worse with knives and things."

15%

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

**"I've lived there all my life I don't know anything different."
"I have lived here for 41 years and have made lots of friends. I know the area, it is very familiar to me and I am close to my family."**

12%

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

"There are nice walks for our dog, but they might disappear."

6%

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

"The bus service is good."

3%

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

"Lots of things to do. I like it here."

Factors that contribute to feeling negative about where you live

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

3%

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

24%

of residents said they dislike **nothing** about the area they live in.

"I like everything."

18%

spoke about the **cleanliness** in the area being a negative.

"I am disturbed by the amount of rubbish."

15%

mentioned the negative impact of the **community**.

"Oiks, some people around here have no manners. It's not just the kids it's the generation. You reap what you sow, if you decide to have kids it's your responsibility to bring them up properly."

15%

of residents spoke about the **traffic**.

"Traffic is becoming a nightmare. It has a daily impact on me. It takes 1 and half hours to drop the kids to school!"

15%

mentioned the issues with **parking**.

"Cost of parking to go to the shops. Stops me shopping locally. Should be free so there is more support."

12%

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

"There is some anti social behaviour at times, but that happens wherever you live."

"The kids are troublesome at night."

9%

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

"There's two buses and one takes an hour one takes 40 minutes. You could be waiting an hour and a half for it and it might never even come. If I've gone to town and the buses are late, more than likely I'm with my kids and we all need to get home. The buses are unreliable and unpredictable."

9%

spoke about the **development of new housing** in the area being a negative.

"So many new houses going up and the people moving in are all very ignorant. Some people really are not nice. Too many different ethnicities."

6%

talked about **green spaces**.

"Don't close local parks, it exposes them to gypsies."

6%

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

"I don't understand why the chemists are closing."

6%

spoke about **urban decay**.

"The town probably needs updating. There's pretty much only a Tesco there. Boots has closed down."

3%

mentioned **issues with the roads** in the area was a negative.

"There are always roadworks everywhere, all time."

Involvement in community groups and activities

We engaged with **34** residents out in the community.

Those involved

14

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

Of those:

100%

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

93%

like the area that they live in.

21%

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:

Out of the **14** residents that **were** involved in community groups:

93%

identified as **White British**.

71%

identified as **female**.

36%

were aged between 75–84.

14%

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

14%

identified as **carers**.

Those not involved

20 were not involved in community groups.

Of those:

95% like where they live.

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

50% do not want to get involved in community groups.

An insight into those not attending community groups in Chatham:

Out of the **20** that were not involved in community groups.

85% identified as **White British**.

55% identified as **female**.

40% identified as having a **disability** or long term **health condition**.

30% were aged between 75–84.

25% identified as **carers**.

Community Groups Mentioned:

Of the **54** responses from Chatham residents, these are the local groups that were mentioned.

- Rainham Organ and Keyboard Club
- Crochet Club
- Cricket Club
- Football Club
- Youth Band
- Sign Language Choir
- Jehovah's Witness
- Church
- Smallholders Club
- Medway Death Café
- 50+ Exercise Dance Class
- Dementia Café
- Rainham Active Group
- Adult Education
- St Margret's
- Healthy Living Walk in Rainham



Benefits of being involved in community groups

Out of the **14** people who said they are involved in community groups:

94%

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

57%

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

"My clubs allow me to meet people, chat, have a bit of me time."

"I try to get out since my husband died. I'm more sociable and optimistic. The groups stop me from getting down. "

29%

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

"I think it's an integral part of it, when things go fine it's good but you need to have support systems and be more widely spread. When you've been through shit you can guide others and you get a huge sense of well-being when you know you're being helpful."

29%

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

"It has physical benefits because it's a sport."

7%

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

"These groups give me a sense of purpose and I can give back to my community ."

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 **34** respondents:

38%

said that there was **nothing** they wished to be involved in.
"I'm getting old and I don't really like walking about. I like being in my bungalow. I'm happy with what I do."

35%

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

"Of course I'd like to have hundreds of hours in the week, but I don't."

"I don't have time for anything extra."

12%

mentioned a **lack of opportunities**.

"I would like to see gentle exercise for seniors."

"Yes I would like to dance but nothing available at the right time for me."

6%

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

"There should be more adverts in the windows, a communal advert board would be good or putting things up in the charity shop windows as they are community shops."

6%

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

"Playing golf - poor health stops me. I miss the social side of it and it sometimes affects my mental health."

6%

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

"I don't have the confidence to do things. Because I don't work it can be a bit isolating."

3%

of people mentioned that their **caring responsibilities** are a barrier to them accessing community groups.

"I don't get out much as my husband has dementia and he stays in bed most of the time; unfortunately, he won't let carers come in, so it's mostly on me."

Summary

- 94%** of the 34 people who said they were involved in community groups believe that **being involved** has an **impact on their health and wellbeing**.
- 94%** of locals said they **like living** in their area.
- 59%** of locals mentioned that the **community** in the area contributes to people liking where they live.
- 57%** of respondents who **are involved in community groups** find that it has a **positive social impact**.
- 50%** of respondents that are not involved in local groups **do not want to get involved**.
- 35%** of respondents mentioned a **lack of spare time** to get involved in local groups.
- 24%** of locals mentioned there was **nothing** that they do not like about where they live.

35 Participants – Profile Breakdown

		Number	Percentage
Gender	Female	21	62%
	Male	13	38%
Transgender		-	
Age	0-15	-	
	16-24	-	
	25-34	2	6%
	35-44	4	12%
	45-54	5	15%
	55-64	6	18%
	65-74	5	15%
	75-84	12	35%
	85-94	-	
	95-99	-	
Sexuality	Heterosexual	34	100%
	Bisexual	-	
	Prefer not to say	-	

		Number	Percentage
Ethnicity	English/Welsh/ Scottish/Northern Irish/British	30	88%
	Indian	1	3%
	White and Asian	1	3%
Any Other White Background	Iraq/Chaldean	1	3%
Any Other Ethnic Group	Chaldean	1	3%
	Prefer not to say	-	
First Language	English	32	94%
	Chaldean	1	3%
	Gujarati	1	3%

		Number	Percentage
Carer		7	21%
	Young Carer	-	
Do you have a disability or health condition?	Yes	11	32%
	Long term health condition	10	29%
	Physical disability	3	9%
	Mental health condition	1	3%
	Learning disability	-	
	Prefer not to say	-	
Neurodiversity	Dyslexia	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 Telephone:
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By Email:
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By Text:
Text us on 07525 861 639. By
texting 'NEED BSL', Healthwatch's
British Sign Language interpreter
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