

## **A Spotlight Report**

# **How people feel about living in Medway**

A spotlight report focusing on **Lordswood** and  
**Walderslade**.



**July 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 July 2024, these reports together contain 273 responses. You can read our other reports [here](#).**

In July 2024, we engaged with **32** residents living across **Walderslade (19)** and **Lordswood (13)**.

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

32 people told us why they like where they live:

84%

of Walderslade and Lordswood locals told us that they **like** where they live.

40%

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

*"It's got a good feeling around here. It's a good place to live in. It's a nice community."*

28%

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

*"We have a Sports and Social club and a retirement club."*

*"There are good amenities here, like the laundrette and the barber."*

*"I like the amenities and the hub. The doctors and the dentist."*

25%

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

*"We live on a bus route which means we can easily get to the shops, Walderslade village and Chatham."*

*"The motorway is near so I can get anywhere."*

16%

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

*"I've always lived here, so why not stay where you are?"*

*"I've been here for 60 years and I'm not likely to move away."*

13%

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

*"We do have a nice woods."*

6%

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

*"Where I live by the woods it's nice and quiet."*

6%

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

**"It's okay, not the worst council. We've got it good, bus stops down to £2 per one way journey."**

6%

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

**"This house I'm living in is the best one I've had."**

6%

of residents mentioned the **cleanliness** is a factor in their levels of happiness about living in the area.

**"The council keep the grass cut and the place looks tidy. I can't complain."**

6%

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

**"It is a nice area. There is no violence."**

3%

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

**"There's nothing I like about it."**

3%

of residents mentioned the **roads** to be a positive about the area.

**"They've (the council) finally fixed the pot holes."**

3%

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

**"The community groups are accessible."**

3%

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

**"It's nice to be involved in a community coffee morning."**

3%

of residents mentioned that they like the **cultural diversity** of the area.

## Factors that contribute to feeling negative about where you live

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

16%

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

41%

of residents spoke about the negatives of the **lack of cleanliness** in the area.

"I think it could be tidier in the environment, but apart from that not much really."

"Littering everywhere, not enough dust bins making an unclean environment."

"Could be tidier. Lots of rubbish gets dumped and [the] community end up cleaning themselves."

19%

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

"Buses don't always turn up and only a few buses come a day to get you into town. Walderslade road [is] closed from 4pm which means walking for the bus."

19%

mentioned the **lack of activities** locally.

"I don't think there is enough space for people to get involved. There needs to be more available for everyone, rather than just the elderly or the young."

16%

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

"30 years ago maybe, but neighbourhood watch has got to grips with it, alongside the police."

13%

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

"There are a lot of new people moving in to the area. I don't want to be racist but, you know what I mean?"

9%

mentioned the negatives of the lack of **parking** available where they live.

**"People that don't live around us park on the street outside our house. It means we can't park outside our own house."**

**"By the shop we can't get past on our scooters because there are so many cars parked up on the pavement and there isn't enough space to get through! That's not just us, but people with prams and things too."**

9%

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

**"They're building more houses and there's no infrastructure."**

9%

of people also spoke about the **poor access to GP surgeries**.

**"You can't get a doctor's appointment."**

6%

spoke about the **lack of amenities** in the area.

**"Very little NHS services."**

6%

of residents mentioned the negative impact of the amount of **traffic** in the local area.

**"The traffic is awful. Worse than it used to be."**

6%

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

**"There's nothing for the kids to do. They throw things at my door and they burnt it. They have no respect. There are always motorbikes up and down. It's just chaos at the moment."**

6%

of people spoken to in the area mentioned **not always feeling safe**.

**"Walking around Chatham I really don't feel safe."**

6%

mentioned the negative impact of **noise** in the area.  
“Noisy cars and motorbikes.”

6%

of residents spoke about **urban decay** having a negative effect on them liking the area.  
“I think the areas have gone downhill. We have lived here for 40 years and the shops are all closed down and boarded up.”

3%

of people also spoke about:

**Cost of living:**

“Higher priced shops and businesses.”

**Issues with accessibility:**

“Too out of the way, I don't like the inconvenience of travelling so far. Busses are down and up hill which makes walking hard and makes me miss appointments.”

**Issues with the post service:**

“Post only comes twice a week.”

**Isolation:**

“I wouldn't stay here if my husband died, it's a bit isolated for retired people.”

It's utter shite. Visually it looks awful. There's nothing to do. I think it's mostly the people, there's a lot of scumbags. There's rubbish everywhere and people just don't care about their environment. The shops are awful. I don't go out at night, it just doesn't feel safe. I wouldn't let my kids go out after dark. I hate it. I'm trying to move out of the area.

I don't want to go out or mix with the community at all. There are lots of houses being built. There's not enough social housing. You can't get a doctors appointment. Medway Hospital is like a third world country, I feel sorry for the staff. It's scary, it looks a shambles.

They've stopped the buses where I live. All the people that live in my road can't use the bus from the end of our road anymore. It's an age-ist society.

## Involvement in community groups and activities

We engaged with **32** Walderslade and Lordswood residents out in the community.

### Those involved

**18**

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.

**94%**

**like** the area that they live in.

**28%**

**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 Walderslade and Lordswood:

Out of the **18** residents that **were involved** in community groups:

**100%**

identified as **White British**.

**72%**

identified as **female**.

**83%**

were aged **65 and over**.

**67%**

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

**39%**

identified as **carers**.



## Those not involved

**14** were not involved in community groups.

### Of those:

**79%** believe liking where you live and being involved in community groups **has an impact** on your health and wellbeing.

**71%** like where they live.

**36%** do not want to get involved in community groups.

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

Out of the **18** that were not involved in community groups.

**86%** identified as **White British**.

**50%** identified as **female**.

**50%** were aged **55-84**.

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

**29%** identified as having a **disability** or long term **health condition**.

**0%** identified as **carers**.

## Community Groups Mentioned:

From the **35** responses from Walderslade and Lordswood residents, these were the local groups that were mentioned.

- The Walderslade Hub
- The Emmanuel Church
- Medway 5 carers
- Chair-aerobics
- Coffee Hub on a Wednesday morning in Walderslade Village
- Salvation Army
- Gillingham Age UK cognitive therapy group
- MEGAN
- 363 club
- M.A.P.S (Mark's Activity Programme Service LTD)
- Youngsters youth centre
- Lordswood Retirement Club
- Reading Club in Lordswood
- The book club at Lordswood library
- Football
- Bingo
- Knitting club at Lordswood library
- PTA Walderslade Primary School
- St David's church
- St William's church
- St Alban's church

## Benefits of being involved in community groups

Out of the **18** people who said they are involved in community groups:

**100%**

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

**94%**

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

*"These people are a lovely lot. They like to talk. It's especially good for people our age as they may be at home on their own."*

*"Socialising can help with dementia as you keep your brain working."*

**33%**

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

*"Because I lost my husband and daughter this has given me a big out and about situation to socialise and help out. I don't sit at home and wonder what to do, it keeps my mood lifted."*

*"The group helps people to smile. I have real down days when I'm not here, and when I come to the group it makes such a difference."*

**11%**

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

*"It gets me out and about and I get to meet people. I'm not just stuck indoors. If I didn't have this, I wouldn't come out. It's something to look forward to."*

**6%**

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

*"I have plenty of friends here. It also helps me get working experience."*

**6%**

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

*"Being involved with other people and building the 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 **28** respondents:

**36%**

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

*"I'm a carer for my husband and my daughter, so I am fully occupied!"*

*"I used to help at Broadfields Academy. I used to read with the children. I can no longer do this as I care for my wife. This has had an impact on me."*

**24%**

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

*"Transport makes it physically hard for me as it takes an hour and a half to get the bus. It gets me uptight and stressed."*

**14%**

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

*"I feel like I don't fit in there, even my kids feel like it too. I can be a bit hermit-y, I'm not really that sociable. I don't feel like it impacts negatively on me."*

**11%**

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

*"A lot of the social groups that were run before covid were volunteer led. This is why they don't carry on, because people leave and nobody wants to take it on themselves to run one. There are groups that are online but people prefer face to face these days."*

*"I would like to see more things for pensioners to do."*

**11%**

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

*"I accept my limitations. I used to do charity runs, now I do charity walks."*

7%

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

**“ I rely on taxis, which means I can't leave anywhere at 3.30 because of the school run, and it's also really expensive. It cost me £16 just to come here today, but if I didn't come then I probably wouldn't go anywhere and I would feel lonely. It's frightening really.”**

7%

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

**“It's hard for me to walk up the hill because I struggled to breathe, so I have to walk down the hill to get a bus to go up the hill. It's just not very accessible. I would like to go to Age Concern, but you just can't get there. It's such a walk up there.”**

4%

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

**“I'm not sure what I can be involved in. I struggle because of my ADHD and don't know how I can help. I can work but struggle with my neurodiversity as well as using computers and paperwork.”**

Three people did not respond to this question.



## Summary

- 100%** of the 18 people who said they were involved in community groups believe that **being involved** has an **impact on their health and wellbeing**.
- 94%** of people that **are involved in community groups** like where they live, whereas out of the people who are not involved in community groups, **71%** like where they live.
- 94%** of respondents who **are involved in community groups** find that it has a **positive social impact**.
- 90%** of people spoken to overall say that liking where you live and being involved in community groups has an **impact on your health and wellbeing**.
- 41%** of respondents mentioned the **lack of cleanliness** as a factor in them disliking living in the area.
- 40%** of locals mentioned that the **community** in the area contributes to people liking where they live.
- 36%** of respondents that are not involved in local groups **do not want to get involved**.
- 33%** of people spoken to that **are involved in community groups** find that being involved has a **positive impact on their mental health**.

## 35 Participants – Profile Breakdown

		Number	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	12	<b>38%</b>
	Female	20	<b>63%</b>
<b>Transgender</b>		0	
<b>Age</b>	0-15	0	
	16-24	1	<b>3%</b>
	25-34	3	<b>9%</b>
	35-44	1	<b>3%</b>
	45-54	4	<b>13%</b>
	55-64	3	<b>9%</b>
	65-74	7	<b>22%</b>
	75-84	10	<b>31%</b>
	85-94	3	<b>9%</b>
		Prefer not to say	0
<b>Sexuality</b>	Heterosexual	29	<b>91%</b>
	Bisexual/Homosexual/Asexual	0	
	Prefer not to say	3	<b>9%</b>

## Profile Breakdown

		Number	Percentage
<b>Ethnicity</b>	English/Welsh/ Scottish/Northern Irish/British	30	<b>94%</b>
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	British/Iranian	1	<b>3%</b>
Any Other Ethnic Origin	Sri Lankan	1	<b>3%</b>
	Prefer not to say	0	
<b>First Langage</b>	English	30	<b>94%</b>
	Tamil	1	<b>3%</b>
	Prefer not to say	1	<b>3%</b>





		Number	Percentage
<b>Carer</b>		7	<b>22%</b>
	Young Carer	0	
<b>Do you have a disability or health condition?</b>		15	<b>47%</b>
	Long term health condition	3	<b>9%</b>
	Physical disability	11	<b>34%</b>
	Learning disability	1	<b>3%</b>
	Mental health condition	2	<b>6%</b>
	Long Term Health Condition	9	<b>28%</b>
	Prefer not to say	2	<b>6%</b>
<b>Neurodiversity</b>	ADHD	1	<b>3%</b>

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



**Online:**  
[www.healthwatchmedway.com](http://www.healthwatchmedway.com)



**By Telephone:**  
Healthwatch Medway Freephone  
0800 136 656



**By Email:**  
[enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com)



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