

A Spotlight Report

How people feel about living in Medway

A spotlight report focusing on **Strood**.



June 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 June 2024, these reports together contain 241 responses. You can read our other reports [here](#).

In June 2024, we engaged with **35** residents living in **Strood**.

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

35 people told us why they like where they live:

80%

of Strood locals told us that they **like** where they live.

49%

of Strood locals mentioned that the **convenience** of the area contributes to people liking where they live.

"I love Strood, everything is so close and on your doorstep"

46%

of residents mentioned the **local amenities** are a factor in their levels of happiness about living in the area.

"There are doctors near by, the dentist, hairdressers."

"Shops, supermarkets, parks for my daughter, easy access to motorways."

34%

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

"People still look out for each other. It makes me feel safe, especially as a young woman."

14%

of residents mentioned the good **public transport** increases their level of satisfaction of where they live.

"There are good public transport including to work and the hospitals.."

14%

14% mentioned the benefit of the **quietness** of the area.

"The quiet is good for my mental health, I like the calm."

14%

14% mentioned the benefit of the **safety** of the area.

"I feel safe living here and walking in town."

14%

14% mentioned the the benefit of the **local history**.

"We can see the castle, all the history. I love Charles Dickens, it's so historical."

11%

mentioned the availability of local **green spaces** are a factor in their levels of happiness about the area they live.

"we are by some greenbelt land - I have a nice, uninterrupted view of the countryside from my doorstep. It does my mental health the world of good. I feel lucky to live with this on my doorstep.."

11%

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

"I have lived here all my life and can't think of where else I'd like to live."

9%

of residents mentioned the **range of local events** in Strood is a factor in their levels of happiness about living in the area.

"I like that there are lots of things to do here in Strood."

6%

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

"You can walk around the high street as it's flat, which is good for people with mobility issues."

6%

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

"I just don't like it at all."

Factors that contribute to feeling negative about where you live

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

20%

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

50%

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

Here is a breakdown of the themes mentioned by those 50%.

20%

mentioned the impact of the use of **drugs and alcohol** in the area and how it negatively impacts how they feel about living in the area.

"The drugs. My children are exposed to drugs."

14%

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

"Homelessness is still visible, and the problems that come with it."

11%

spoke about seeing **aggressive behaviour**.

"The area has gotten rowdier with the kids, we live near Broomhill Park, where they congregate and they can be a bit aggressive."

9%

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

"It does affect people, kids are scared, you are nervous to go out."

3%

mentioned incidents of **vandalism**.

"They were messing with our fence one day and I told them not to. The next day, it was no longer there."

3%

mentioned incidents of **robberies**.

"The pigeon square over there has so many thugs, they start on people, that's where you can get robbed. And if you walk through the Churchyard 9/10 times you're going to get robbed."

3%

of people specifically mentioned the **night-time economy**.

"We live opposite a bar/club which can be very lively, which isn't ideal when you have to get up at 6am to go to work. I think the rowdiness, the shouting at all hours can negatively impact your mental health."

Other factors that contribute to feeling negative about where you live

20%

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

"The traffic! It's not the pollution so much as how long it takes you to get home."

20%

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

"It's just jobs and snobs. People no longer bother to get to know each other, take no interest in their neighbours."

20%

spoke about the **lack of amenities** and how that negatively impacts how they feel about living in the area.

**"We need more shops and a bigger variety of shops."
"Shame there are no banks left on the High Street."**

14%

mentioned the negative impact of issues with the amount of **potholes** and **road closures**.

"The potholes are a nightmare. I have reported them and we are still waiting for something to be done - there isn't enough money, so will just have to wait and see."

14%

of residents spoke about the amount of **rubbish** left around the area having a negative impact on them liking the area.

**"I think it's untidy."
"Medway in general looks a mess all the time."**

14%

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

"There isn't anything I don't like, as I said I use to live in London."

11%

mentioned issues with **public transport** negatively impacting how they feel about living in Strood.

"Public transport itself isn't fantastic - it feels a bit like roulette as to whether the bus will turn up."

11%

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

“People complain about the parking around Strood, not enough of it.”

“There is limited off street parking which I know can be annoying.”

11%

of residents spoke about **urban decay** in Strood.

“I don't like that all the banks are shutting, a lot of people feel like that about it. For me personally there are too many nail bars, kebab shops and vape shops opening or opening.”

11%

mentioned the negative impact of **noise** in the area.

“The noise pollution of young people on motorbikes.”

6%

mentioned the **lack of activities** in Strood.

“I would like the area more if there was more going on.”

“There's not much for young people to do here.”

6%

spoke about how the **urban development** in the area negatively impacts on residents liking where they live.

“We don't like it as much as I used to, there are too many developments about and not the infrastructure to support it.”

3%

of people also spoke about:

Access to GP

“The GP services are terrible.”

Destruction of wildlife

“They have gotten rid of a lot of the wildlife there, like the foxes and the rabbits.”

Housing

“[The housing association] still need to sort out the leak from the upstairs flat and the mould.”

Immigration

“We have too many immigrants. It's not been too bad recently, but you get groups of them hanging around, it feels threatening.”

Employment

“It's still a struggle to get a job even if you live in a nice part of Strood. ”

Involvement in community groups and activities

We engaged with Strood residents out in the community.

35 people told us if they were involved in local community groups.

17 **were** involved in community groups.

88% believe liking where you live and being involved in groups **has an impact** on your health and wellbeing.

88% **like** where they live.

35% **do not** want to get involved in anything else apart from the groups they are already involved in.

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

72% believe liking where you live and being involved in groups **has an impact** on your health and wellbeing.

72% **like** where they live.

28% **do not** want to get involved in community groups.

Demographics of those involved and not involved in community groups

Out of the **17** that **were** involved in community groups.

76% identified as **White British**.

59% identified as **female**.

47% were aged **65 and over**.

6% identified as having a **primary language other than English**.

47% identified as having a **disability** or long term **health condition**.

6% identified as **carers**.

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

72% identified as **White British**.

67% identified as **female**.

56% were aged **25-44**.

17% identified as having a **primary language other than English**.

17% identified as having a **disability** or long term **health condition**.

22% identified as **carers**.

Community Groups Mentioned:

From the **35** responses from Strood residents, these were the local groups that were mentioned.

- Football at Strood Sports Centre
- Boxing at Combat Sports Academy
- Church
- Ukulele lessons at Saint Augustine's church
- Strood Seniors Club
- Frinsbury Working Men's Club
 - Gardening Club
- Disability Sports Club at Medway Park
- Strood Disability Club
- Bocce at Prince Arthur Bowling Club
- Pensioners Club
 - Bingo
 - Raffle
- The gym
- Allotment Association
- Scouts
- The Trefoil Guild
- Local Rotary group
- Veterans Group up at the church
- Minimus in Rochester
- Subvelo Cycle Club
- Rochester Cycle Club
- Rebel Runners

Benefits of being involved in community groups

Out of the **17** people who said they are involved in community groups:

88%

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

53%

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

"[The people that attend the group] look out for each other. It's not about how fast they run, it's about running as a group."

47%

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

"I enjoy being in the fresh air, keeping active."

"For me being in a cycling club helps me keep fit and the others there we all encourage each other, we try and make it into a game."

24%

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

"It's outdoors, I like being outdoors. I use it for my mental health."

"My main thing is fishing. It doesn't matter if you don't catch anything, it's about relaxing and looking at the wildlife."

6%

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

"It keeps you fit and also teaches you self-defence."

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 **35** respondents:

31%

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

Of these responses:

17%

said that there was nothing they wished to be involved in as they **already have all they need**.

"I used to do a toddler group, which I enjoyed. I no longer do it but I don't feel I am missing out or there is anything I want to get involved."

20%

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

"I work full-time and I have no spare time, but maybe when I am retired - it's hard enough as it is to fit in my yoga and Pilates."

11%

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

"I would like to join a walking group but they are full of old people here, I'd like a young persons one. Or a community group or a cycling group. Maybe they could put on a networking even for people aged 18-40 years old. I looked into volunteering but again it was nearly all older people. I just really want to make friends and feel like part of the community. As a Muslim woman I am not going to be going to the pubs and things, I just feel so depressed."

9%

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

"I would like to get involved in tennis or squash at some point, look into those facilities, but I don't get chance to venture out of Strood much due to having to use public transport to go further afield."

6%

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

"I would like to start running again, but I have leg trouble. I could make the effort to find a club; they are there if I wanted, but I don't think I am capable [of running] anymore."

6%

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

"I would like to do something like maybe yoga or pilates, but it needs to be free. I am going now to the community hub to see what freebies they have for retired people. Where my sister lives they have all sorts of free activities for pensioners!"

3%

of respondents spoke about a **lack of knowledge** of what is available in the area.

"I could hunt them out if I really wanted to, but it could be easier."

3%

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

"I would say it would be good if there were more parks, even say something like a football academy up at the Strood Sports Centre."

28%

of residents spoken to say that not being involved in community groups does not affect them.



Summary

- 88%** of the 17 people who said they were involved in community groups believe that **being involved** has an **impact on their health and wellbeing**.
- 80%** of overall respondents said they **like** living in Strood.
- 80%** of overall respondents said where they live and being involved in the community **has an impact** on their health and wellbeing.
- 53%** of the 17 people who said they are involved in community groups believe that **being involved** has a **positive social impact**.
- 50%** of respondents mentioned **crime and anti-social behaviour** as a factor in them not liking living in Strood.
- 49%** of Strood locals mentioned that the **convenience** of the area contributes to people liking where they live.
- 47%** of respondents that were involved in local groups identified as having a **disability or long term health condition**.
- 28%** of residents spoken to say that **not being involved** in community groups **does not** affect them.

35 Participants – Profile Breakdown

		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	22	63%
	Female	13	37%
	Prefer not to say	0	
Transgender		0	
Age	0-15	2	6%
	16-24	1	3%
	25-34	7	20%
	35-44	6	17%
	45-54	5	14%
	55-64	0	
	65-74	10	29%
	75-84	3	9%
	Prefer not to say	1	3%
	Sexuality	Heterosexual	35
Bisexual/Homosexual/Asexual		0	
Prefer not to say		0	

		Number	Percentage
Ethnicity	English/Welsh/ Scottish/Northern Irish/British	26	74%
	African	2	6%
	Caribbean	1	3%
	Indian	2	6%
Any other White Background	Australian	1	3%
	Czech	1	3%
Any other Asian Background	Afghan	1	3%
Any Other Ethnic Origin	Sri Lankan	1	3%
	Prefer not to say	0	
First Langage	English	31	89%
	Tamil	1	3%
	Shona	1	3%
	Dari	1	3%
	Czech	1	3%

		Number	Percentage
Carer		5	14%
	Young Carer	0	
Do you have a disability or health condition?		11	31%
	Long term health condition	3	9%
	Physical disability	2	6%
	Learning disability	3	9%
	Mental health condition	2	6%
	Prefer not to say	0	



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



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