

A Spotlight Report

How people feel about living in Medway

A spotlight report focusing on the peninsula
villages of **Allhallows, Cliffe, Cliffe Woods, High
Halstow, Isle of Grain and Stoke**



January 2024

Background

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.

In January 2024, we engaged with 45 residents living in rural areas on the peninsula, in **Cliffe** (12), **Cliffe Woods** (9), **Isle of Grain** (8), **Allhallows** (7), **High Halstow** (7) and **Stoke** (2).

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.

Headlines

100%

of people who are **involved in community groups** said that they do like where they live.

91%

of respondents said that they **like the area** in which they live.

87%

of those involved in community groups were **over the age of 65**.

77%

of people said that **environmental factors** where they lived had an impact upon their health and wellbeing.

73%

of people involved in community groups believe that **being involved** has an impact on their health and wellbeing.

67%

of people that were involved in community groups were **female**, twice the number of men.

50%

of people we spoke to who have a **disability** were involved in a community group.

40%

of respondents found being involved in community groups was helpful for **staying active**.

0%

No carers we spoke to said they were involved in a community group, despite carers making up 13% of our overall respondents.

Methodology

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

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

Participant Profile

We spoke to **45** people, of these:

100% of people identified as **White British**

60% of people identified as **female**

40% of people identified as **male**

18% of people identified as **disabled**

13% of people identified as a **carer**

4% of people identified as having a **long term illness**

2% of people identified as having a **mental health issue**

How do people feel about where they live?

91% (41) of respondents said that they like the area in which they live.

Of these:

61% of people identified as **female**

39% of people identified as **male**

54% were aged **65 and above**

31% were between the ages of **45-64**

10% were between **0-24**

5% were between **25-44**

100% of people **who identified as having a disability** said they liked where they live.

100% of people that **identified themselves as carers** said they like where they live.

93% of all **females** said they like the area in which they live.

89% of all **males** said they like the area in which they live.

80% of people **aged 16-25** said they like where they live.

9% of all people spoken to **do not** like the area where they live.

Factors that contribute to feeling positive about where you live

43 people told us why they like where they live:

57%

mentioned that they like how **quiet** their area is.

40%

mentioned that they like the level of access to local **green spaces, woodlands** and **seascapes**, with **36%** (16) specifically saying that they liked having a **range of places to walk for leisure**.

38%

mentioned that they liked living within a **friendly local community**.

13%

mentioned that having **local amenities** (shops, pubs, GP surgery) **within walking distance** was a positive factor.

11%

mentioned that them and their families **feeling safe** in their environment was a contributing factor.

9%

people mentioned that having **family ties** in their local area was a factor in their level of happiness in the areas they lived.

7%

mentioned the positives of their children growing up and having **access to safe outside spaces**.

“It feels safe and it's nice to have the kids growing up here. It's nice to have the countryside and we love going on field walks.”

“It's quiet and peaceful around here and it's walking distance to the pub.”

“There are nice places to walk the dogs, there's lots of green space.”

Factors that contribute to feeling negative about where you live

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

42%

mentioned that **public transport** and **road infrastructure** had a negative impact.

22%

mentioned the negatives around a **lack of local amenities**.

20%

mentioned the **development of new housing** and concern around further pressure on local amenities.

17%

mentioned that they were unhappy with **access to and services provided by GPs**.

16%

mentioned the **social negatives** of living within rural local communities.

9

people mentioned **other factors** that had a negative impact on how they felt about where they live, including **not always feeling safe (3)**, **a lack of cleanliness and upkeep (3)** and **lack of youth activities (3)**.

"I don't like the village community in the sense that if you fart, everybody knows about it."

"The doctors isn't so good, there are no doctors here, you have to go to Hoo. I have to get someone to take me because the public transport is rubbish."

"There's no infrastructure or amenities for the houses they're building."

Involvement in community groups and activities

Out of the **45** respondents:

34%

of people said that they were **involved in local community groups**. Appendix 1 lists the community groups and activities that they mentioned.

Of the **15** respondents who told us they do get involved:

100%

said that they **like where they live**.

87%

were aged **65 and above**.

67%

of those who are involved in community groups **identified as female**, which is twice the number of men who said they got involved.

27%

of people who **identified as having a disability** said they were involved in community groups. This is 50% of the total number of participants who identified as having a disability.

13%

were between the ages of **45-64**.

0

No carers said that they were involved in community groups, despite carers making up 13% of our overall respondents.

Benefits of being involved in community groups

Out of the **15** people who said they are involved in community groups:

73%

of people involved in community groups believe that being involved has an **impact on their health and wellbeing**.

40%

mentioned that involvement in community groups helps them with **keeping active**.

40%

mentioned that getting involved **benefits them socially**.

20%

of people did not specify how they felt about being involved in community groups.



"It gets you out and makes you do something."

"It's better to get out and meet people than stay indoors and do nothing."

"It helps me with my balance."

"It does benefit me through social contact."

"[It] makes you talk to people."

"Everybody is friendly, it's definitely good for me."

"I enjoy joining in with activities in the area, the people are nice."



Barriers to joining community groups

We asked people whether they faced any barriers to joining community groups or getting involved with anything locally;

70%

mentioned that there was nothing they wished to be involved in.

16%

mentioned not having **free time** to get involved in community groups and activities.

"I have three children [so] I don't have a lot of spare time... If it was something to do with the kids, I would [get involved]."

9%

mentioned a **lack of amenities and groups** locally.

5%

mentioned the barriers of **public transport** to access community groups and activities.

"I don't drive, so if I want to get involved in anything outside of [my village] I need to get a friend to take me."

5%

mentioned barriers due to their **physical health**.

"I used to play football, but I can't any more due to a work injury."

Appendix

Groups that have been mentioned:

Allhallows

- Allhallows Church
 - Art Club
 - Hub Cafe
- Pavillion Cafe

Cliffe

- Village Hall
 - Village Committee
 - Pilates
- Football Group

Cliffe Woods

- Community Centre
 - Quiz Night
 - Social Club

High Halstow

- Line Dancing Group
- Village Committee
- Keep Fit Group
- Heron Cafe

Isle of Grain

- St George's Day Parade
- Annual Street Party
- Village Fete

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



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