

A Spotlight Report

How people feel about
living in Medway



A spotlight report
focusing on the Medway
town of Rainham.

August
2025

A spotlight report on the Building Blocks of Life, focusing on Rainham.

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About Us

Healthwatch Medway are independent champions for health and social care in Medway. Our aim is to improve services by ensuring local voices are heard – we want to hear about health and social care experiences so as to influence positive change for communities across the Medway area. We have the power to influence NHS leaders and other decision makers to listen to your feedback and improve standards of care.

Healthwatch Medway is hosted by EK360.

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 August 2025, we engaged with **40** residents living in Rainham.

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.

There will be 9 reports in this series coming out across 2025, as a follow on from the 9 reports in our 'Medway Areas' series in 2024.

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.

Some percentages presented in this report may not total 100% exactly. This is either due to participants being able to select multiple responses for certain questions, or due to rounding of percentages to the nearest whole number.

Findings

The Impact Living in Rainham has on Residents

What’s good about living in your area?

We asked 40 residents living in Rainham what they like about their area. *Figure 1* shows the number of mentions by positive theme. 2 people said ‘nothing’. 1 person did not answer.

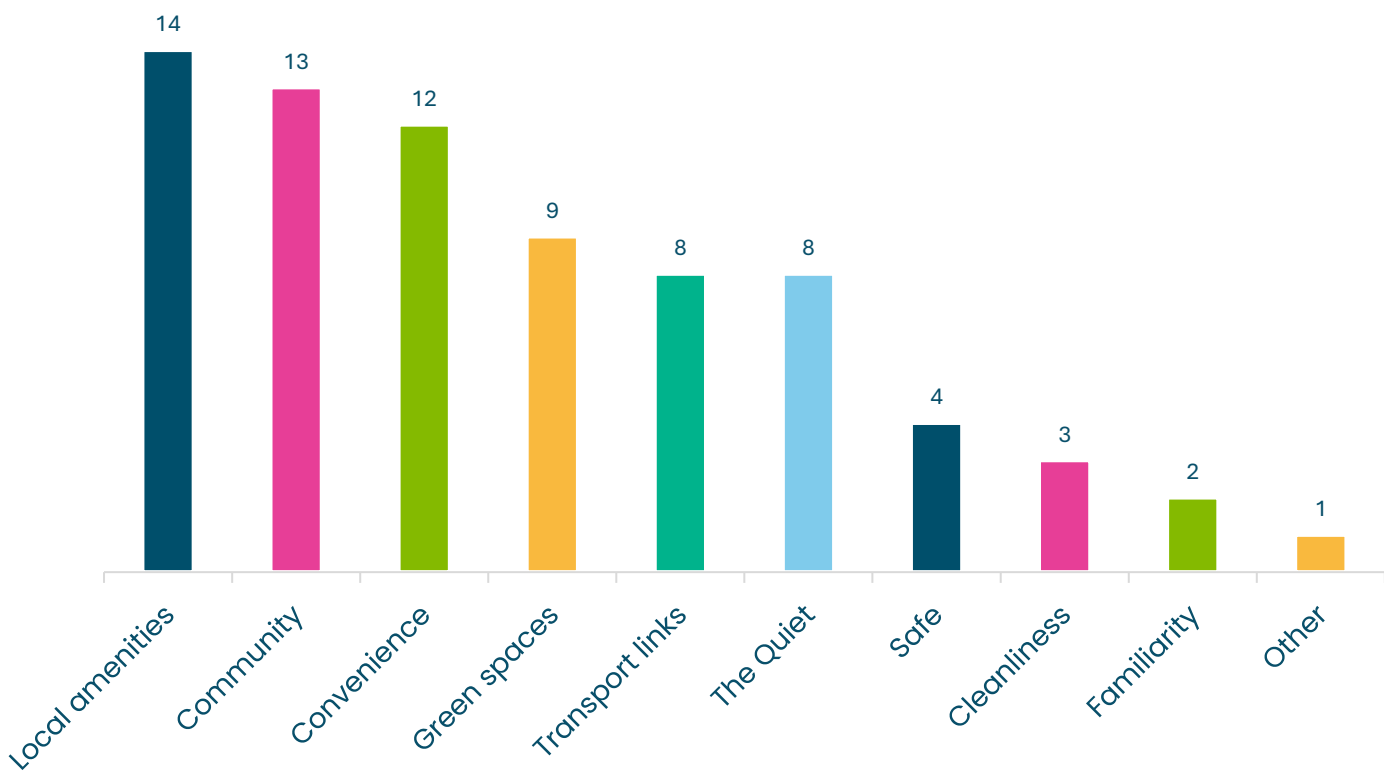


Figure 1 – Number of mentions by positive theme

Local amenities (14 mentions)

35% mentioned local amenities.

- “We have a local butcher and the Nutmeg coffee shop is really nice.”
- “The precinct; we have a nice coffee shop (Boyce’s) and a good butcher’s.”
- “The shops and we have a good fish monger.”
- “There are nice places to eat.”

The Community (13 mentions)

33% mentioned the community.

- "I like the people – a good, nice community."
- "There's a good community spirit and people get on well and look after each other. We've had some deaths recently so people are looking out for each other."
- "Becoming more multi-cultural." More people diversity moving here."

Convenience (12 mentions)

30% mentioned convenience.

- "It's convenient for the shops. I live in sheltered accommodation and I love it there. It's so easy for me to just nip in here [Rainham Precinct]. I can also get to Hempstead Valley easily from here. There is a bus stop outside where I live, so I don't have to think, don't have to worry about getting there."
- "Everything is close together and there's a good variety of shops."
- "We are close to a good hospital and doctor."
- "All these spaces are within walking distance and there are lots of different bits to different places. The train station is near too, which helps."

Green spaces (9 mentions)

23% of respondents mentioned that they enjoy the green spaces.

- "The parks – there are lots of good parks."
- "There is a lovely riverside walk, where I take my dog."
- "There is some nice scenery in the Riverpark and nice natural spots."

Transport links (8 mentions)

20% mentioned transport links.

- "I like being near the station. The trains are good. I use them a lot."
- "It's between the coast and London. Train service is good."

The Quiet (8 mentions)

20% mentioned the quiet.

- "It is quite quiet and pleasant."
- "It's quiet and there's a nice feeling."
- "Not too crowded. Quiet."

Safe (4 mentions)

10% mentioned safety.

- "Been here since 1969. like Rainham best – feel safe."
- "There's not too much anti-social behaviour."

Cleanliness (3 mentions)

8% mentioned the cleanliness of the area.

- "The disabled public loo is spotless, although the leaves do get under the door at this time of year."
- "There's regular bin collections – weekly, and that's not the case in every area."

Familiarity (2 mentions)

5% mentioned familiarity.

- "Lived here for 36 years. Love it here."
- "I was born in Rainham. Live in a flat. I know a lot of people in the area."

Other (1 mention)

3% mentioned other good things about living in their area.

- "It's a nice area and I my property backs on to the trainline so nothing can be built behind me."

Positive Impacts of the Area

Following up on our first question, we asked respondents, 'How does that have a positive impact on you?'

33 of the 40 respondents (**82%**) said that where they live has a positive impact on them, 1 respondent said that it does not (**3%**) and 6 respondents (**15%**) did not answer or said 'don't know'. Some respondents specified multiple positive impacts. *Figure 2* represents the specified positive impacts of the area

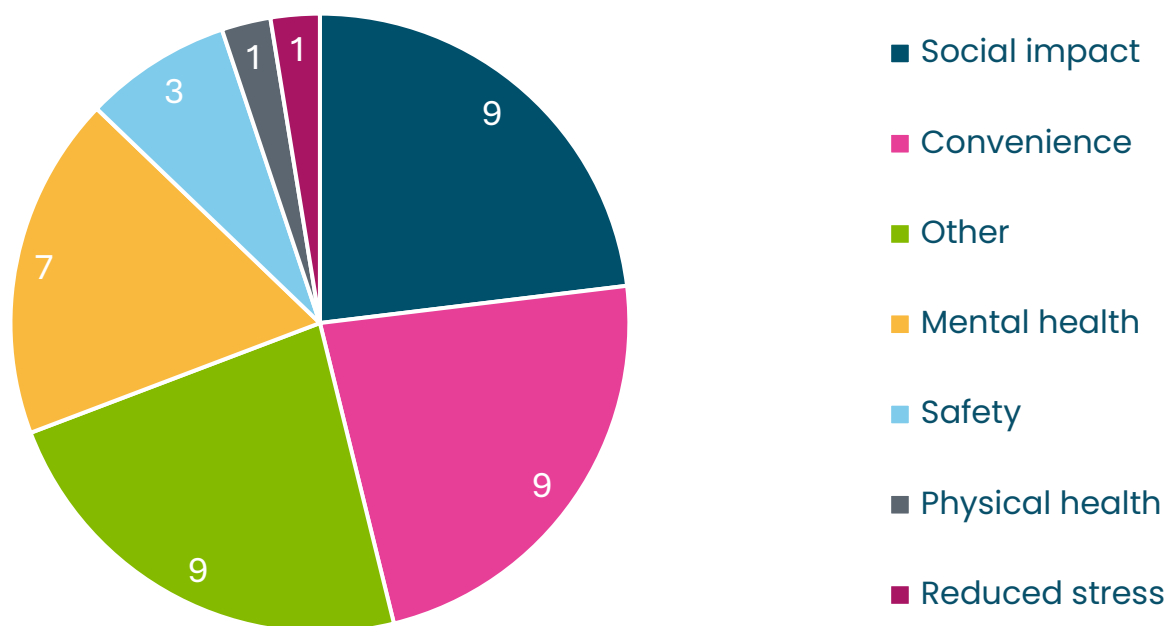


Figure 2 – Number of mentions by positive impact

Social impact (9 mentions)

23% of people mentioned that where they live had a positive impact on their social life.

- "Part of wellbeing. Get the balance between work and rebalance. Coffee and 20 minutes with a friend."
- "I feel a part of the community."
- "Feel like I belong. Makes me feel valued."

Convenience (9 mentions)

23% mentioned the convenience.

- “Having the blood test at the healthy living centre means I don't have to travel to Medway hospital. When I do have to go over there, if my family can't take me I book with a volunteer driver.”
- “Because getting older means it is great that everything is here, on our doorstep. You don't have to struggle to get anywhere.”
- “Don't have to travel far for fresh air and items.”

Other (9 mentions)

23% of respondents mentioned other positive impacts.

- “Helps teach my children about inclusivity.”
- “It's a subtle quality of life thing, the way your surroundings nurture you.”
- “Lots of trees are planted along the rail line, so it is nice to look out and see greenery.”

Mental health (7 mentions)

18% of respondents said that where they live had a positive impact on their mental health.

- “[The Sign Language Group community group] has really helped people – particularly my daughter – with her mental health. It has inspired and helped a lot of people. It has trained people in British Sign Language (BSL), with people going on to do advanced levels of training.”
- “It's great for the kids, it takes the pressure off, especially if you don't have the finances to do other activities. You can walk and enjoy the spaces, it's good for your mental health.”
- “It gets me out and no emotional breakdown. Out in nature, feel good.”

Safety (3 mentions)

8% of respondents mentioned a positive impact of living in the area was that they felt safe.

- “Feel peaceful and feel safe.”
- “It makes me more comfortable leaving the house.”

Physical health (1 mention)

3% of people mentioned a positive physical health impact.

- “The parks [have a positive impact]. There are lots of walks, and it’s good for walks with the dog.”

Reduced stress (1 mention)

3% of people mentioned a reduction in stress as a result of living in their area.

- “Rest of mind. There are no worries.”

What are the negatives about living in your area?

We asked 40 respondents what they dislike about the area they live in. *Figure 3* shows the number of mentions by negative theme. 3 people said there is nothing negative about living in their area.

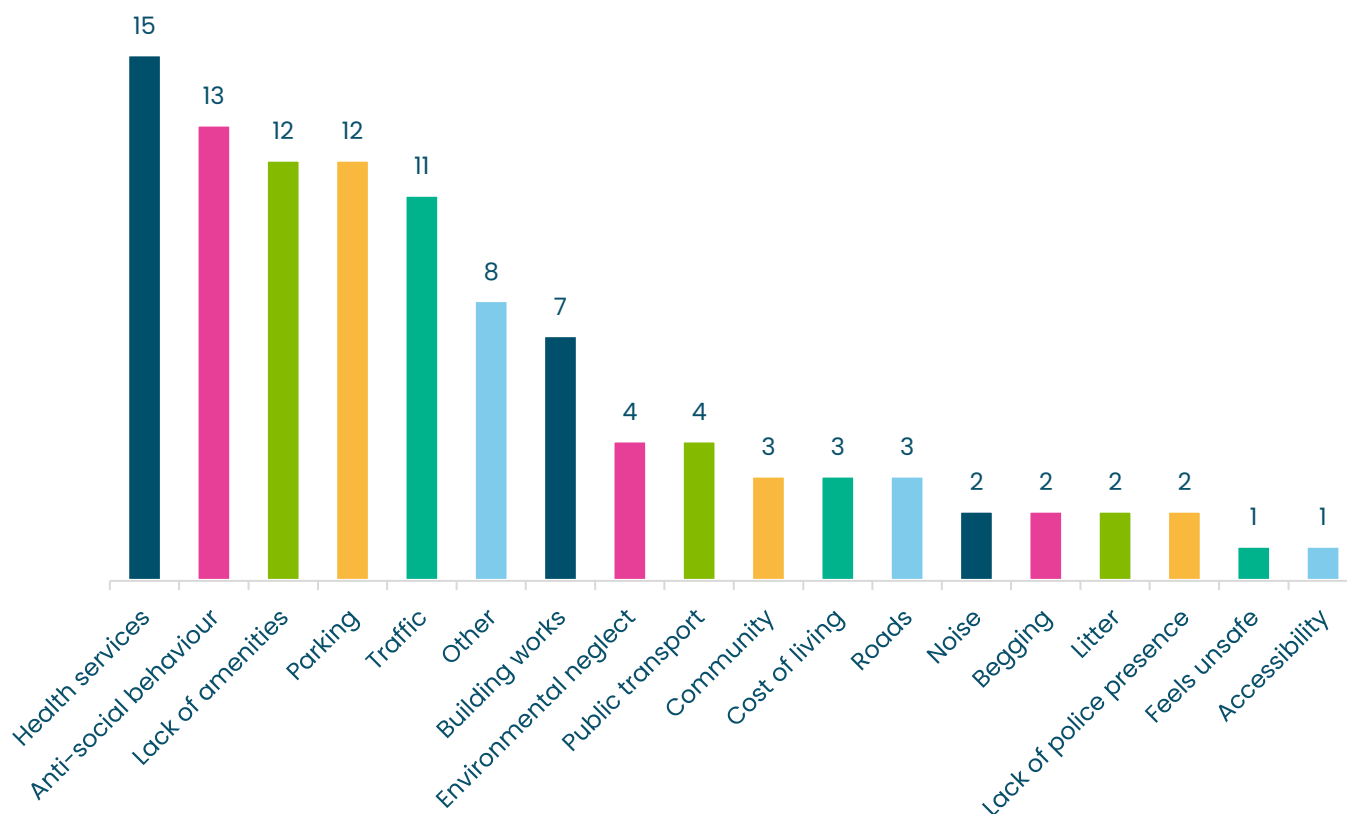


Figure 3 – Number of mentions by negative theme

Health services (13 mentions)

33% mentioned issues with health services. **25%** specifically mentioned lack of pharmacies.

- “The GP is a nightmare – getting an appointment is difficult. Hospital is under pressure and so busy.”
- “Not having a local pharmacy, my partner is on medication, so they have to now travel to get it as there isn't a chemist here.”
- “There's no chemist now. Old people can't get to get their prescriptions.”

Anti-social behaviour (13 mentions)

33% mentioned anti-social behaviour in the area.

- “Youngsters do what they like, there's no respect. Where I live, it is L-shaped and a great big field nearby. It needs to be gated so people behave better... We have a front door and a back door and people walking past bang on the windows – we have even had them come in and have sex! There is nothing to say that it is private property and there is nothing we can do... We just want to retire, live in peace, I want people to leave me alone. It's driven some elderly people to suicide – you don't hear about that, do you?”
- “There are problems with youths. It's not all youngsters, but there are some and its increasing. For example, I saw a man walking some dogs. They weren't being bad, but these youngsters threatened the man and his dogs. And another time an elderly gent was leaving a shop and these youths squirted coke at him and threw a bottle of water at him.”
- “My son has been threatened to be beaten up.”
- “Anti-social behaviour towards shops and elderly in the precinct. It is intimidating.”

Lack of amenities (12 mentions)

30% of people mentioned the lack of local amenities where they live, particularly banks.

- “The number of banks that have closed down including mine which was Nat West.”
- “No banks here. 5 businesses closed this year! Not a very nice place to live.”
- “Its quite difficult with shops closing, and we've lost the market. There's no bank – 3 of the banks have closed now. Lots of things are shutting down.”

Parking (12 mentions)

30% mentioned issues with parking, particularly the cost of parking in the area.

- “Parking charges are too high. They should be lower for short parking.”
- “Parking in general is awful.”
- “Carers can't even park and they take no notice of ambulances. The walkways are blocked as well.”
- “Cars park on the pavement, blocking my mobility scooter.”
- “Parking is very dear. I am a blue badge holder and it still costs.”

Traffic (11 mentions)

28% of respondents mentioned traffic in their area.

- “There's a lot of traffic, heavy lorries through Rainham. The link road and the M2 were supposed to take traffic away from Rainham but it hasn't. The traffic is really bad and carries on all night.”
- “The speed limit on the roads should be reduced from 30 mph to 20 mph especially near schools and at school times.”
- “Traffic management is non-existent, they close all the major arteries and then wonder why it's all backed up.”
- “If there is a crash or incident on the M2 all the traffic gets diverted so it becomes very congested with all the roads getting clogged up.”

Other (8 mentions)

20% mentioned other negative aspects of their area.

- “Water out of the tap is not always clean or clear. During the Summer 2025 it happened every week and we got stomach aches.”
- “We have experienced racism here on many occasions, which is something we never experienced before we moved here.”

Building works (7 mentions)

18% mentioned building works, and particularly a lack of perceived infrastructure.

- “I feel the area is going downhill because there are too many houses being built and no additional facilities like schools and GP surgeries.”
- “There is a lot of development, they are building over the countryside, and they aren't building enough roads and infrastructure. That's especially true in Lower Rainham where there have been 4 new developments in the last 20 years.”
- “The other housing developments. The developers are meant to provide the area with local amenities, but they don't materialise and when confronted, they say it is not easy to explain. And where they are building all these new houses, you need to put in the infrastructure, you need to put in the amenities. But where do you get all the doctors and nurses and teachers from? There is no planning.”

Environmental neglect (4 mentions)

10% mentioned environmental neglect.

- “Area is going down. Getting shabby, run down.”
- “It’s gone downhill recently, especially in Rainham. It needs a facelift. You can’t walk on the pavements, they’re all broken or overgrown with bushes. The area isn’t nice, it’s a deprived area.”

Public transport (4 mentions)

10% mentioned issues with public transport.

- “The buses are both terrible and expensive.”
- “Buses are always delayed.”
- “If you haven’t got a car, it’s very difficult and takes so long (hours) to get around and it’s so expensive. You end up waiting for ages and buses and trains are cancelled a lot. You can’t rely on it. And the fares are so expensive. I’ve got adult children and they find it very difficult.”

Community (3 mentions)

8% mentioned the community.

- “They need to take back all the Londoners flooding in.”
- “I have a horrible neighbour – using my space to hang pots on my side.”

Cost of living (3 mentions)

8% of respondents spoke about the cost of living.

- “The rates that Medway Council charges small businesses means small businesses can’t sustain a living; the rates are ridiculous.”
- “Rents for shops is too high for shops to be unique or independent.”

Roads (3 mentions)

8% of respondents mentioned issues with roads.

- “Loads of pot holes and pavement holes.”
- “There are also too many road closures and road works.”

Noise (2 mentions)

5% mentioned noise in the area.

- “We live near a pub and there's a lot of noise pollution, but it's not just specific to the pub.”
- “There's a very busy road near by – noisy.”

Begging (2 mentions)

5% mentioned begging in the area.

- “I don't like seeing the beggars.”
- “Too many people begging.”

Litter (2 mentions)

5% mentioned litter.

- “It is filthy. Rubbish everywhere.”
- “Rubbish everywhere. Not enough bins.”

Lack of police presence (2 mentions)

5% mentioned a lack of police presence in the area.

- “There is a lack of security present in the precinct area especially and a lot of shoplifting goes on, it would be good to see 'more bobbies on the beat', there needs to be more CCTV covering the entrance to the loos, the car park and the library.”
- “You don't see the police supervising anything.”

Feels unsafe (1 mention)

3% mentioned feeling unsafe in the area.

Accessibility (1 mention)

3% mentioned accessibility.

- “I have a spinal injury and rely on my mobility scooter to get about but I can't get into any of the [banks] as they don't have disabled access.”

How does that have a negative impact on you?

We followed up the previous question by asking respondents how the negatives they identified had an impact on them. 34 out of the 40 respondents (**85%**) said that where they live does have a negative impact on them and 4 respondents (**10%**) said that it does not. 2 respondents (**5%**) did not answer. Some respondents specified multiple negative impacts. *Figure 4* shows the specified negative impacts of the area.

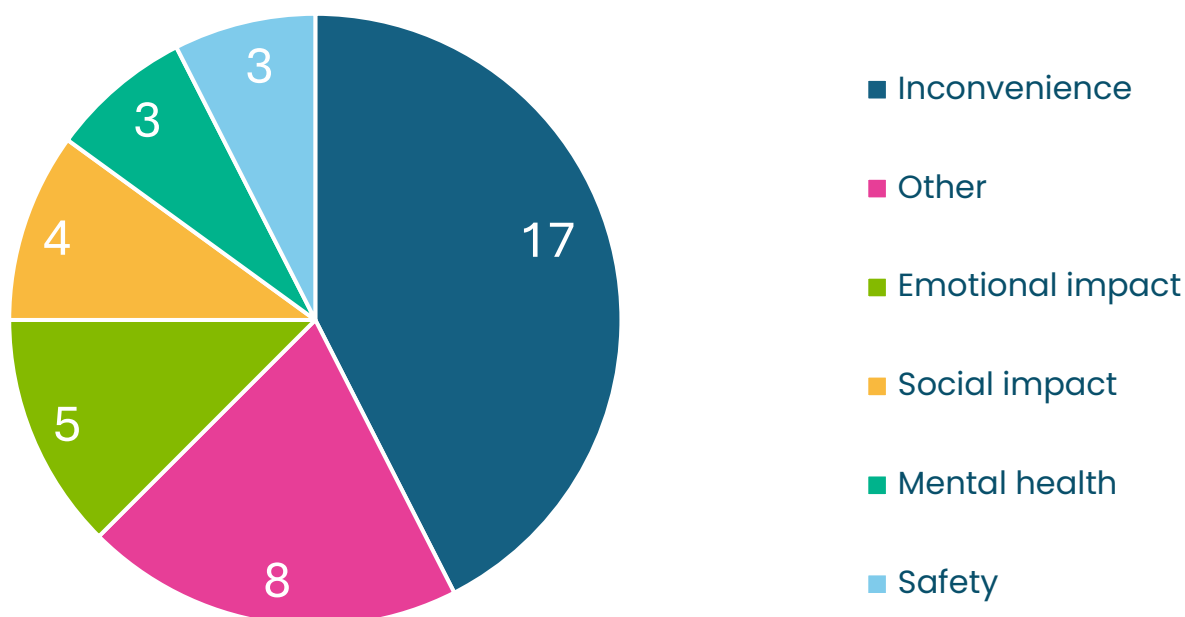


Figure 4 – Number of mentions by negative impact

Inconvenience (17 mentions)

43% spoke about inconvenience.

- “It takes a lot more time to get to anywhere you want to go, because of the additional people/cars on the road and the different road works. I have to leave home at 5am to get to work in London for 7.30am.”
- “It makes things difficult. If you want to bank cash, you have to go to Sittingbourne or even further away.”
- “Means that you have to travel which is difficult as I don't drive.”

Other (8 mentions)

20% of people mention other negative impacts.

- "The shouting we hear disturbs our sleep."
- "More cars on the roads means more fumes which isn't good."
- "There's the financial impact of the parking costs. It makes me less likely to come here."

Emotional impact (5 mentions)

13% of people mentioned an emotional impact.

- "Makes me feel annoyed."
- "I feel very frustrated sometimes."

Social impact (4 mentions)

10% of people mentioned the social impact.

- "Community gone – new houses not mixing. Not interested in mixing, integrating."

Mental health (3 mentions)

8% of people mentioned an impact on their mental health.

- "It's a bit anxiety-inducing. I feel on edge, like, am I going to get there on time? I can feel that inside me. It's not a nice way to start the day."
- "It has a really big negative impact and as a result we want to move away. Racism is a big part of that (about 40%), but generally there is just a really depressing vibe."

Safety (3 mentions)

8% of people mentioned feeling unsafe.

- "My son does feel threatened. My son is worried and hates being there."
- "I also don't like going out in the evenings, I don't feel safe there are too many new people to the area who don't seem willing to fit in."

Improving the Health and Wellbeing of Medway Residents

When you think of health and wellbeing what comes to mind?

We asked respondents what comes to mind when they think of health and wellbeing. Figure 5 shows the responses to this question. 3 people did not answer.

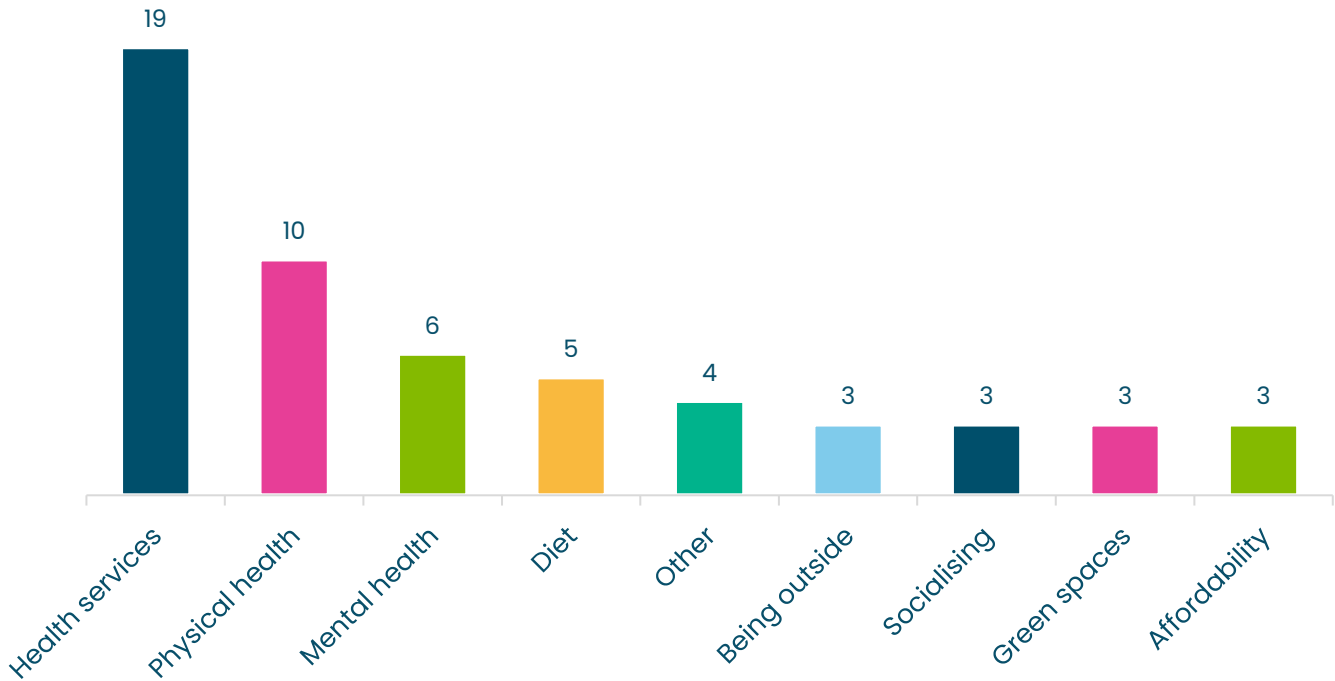


Figure 5 – Number of mentions by response to the question: “When you think of health and wellbeing, what comes to mind?”

Health services (19 mentions)

48% of people spoken to mentioned health services as something they think of when prompted by the question.

- “Lack of available health care appointments at the GPs and dentist.”
- “What services are available; GPs; mental health services; support groups. I think holistically, about how everything comes together.”
- “I think about the local healthy living centre and the lack of pharmacies.”
- “NHS comes to mind – I love it! but I worry about the waiting lists.”

Physical health (10 mentions)

25% of respondents mentioned they associate physical health with health and wellbeing.

- "General health and that we need to pay more attention to our health as we get older."
- "Keeping as healthy, keeping active. Balanced life."

Mental Health (6 mentions)

15% mentioned mental health.

- "Mental wellbeing. Mental is more important as it can affect your physical."
- "Mental wellbeing – that's why parks and walking are so good."

Diet (5 mentions)

13% of people mentioned diet.

- "Eating healthily, keeping fit."
- "Healthy eating, Looking after your weight."
- "What you're eating."

Other (4 mentions)

10% of people mentioned other things that come to mind when they think of health and wellbeing.

- "Everything being in alignment – chakras."
- "Nobody fighting. Everything peaceful."
- "All my family – if they are okay then I am okay."

Being outside (3 mentions)

8% of people mentioned being outside.

Green spaces (3 mentions)

8% of people mentioned green spaces.

- "My garden. I'm a keen gardener with a big garden."
- "Open parks and spaces."

Socialising (3 mentions)

8% of respondents spoke about socialising as something they related to health and wellbeing.

- “Social support. ”
- “Meeting up with my friends at Wetherspoons and a local cafe every day, to catch up.”

Affordability (3 mentions)

8% mentioned affordability.

- “Making things like swimming and gym membership cheaper. I took my family to the local pool it cost £50 for the four of us to go swimming – people can't afford to do that every week.”
- “The current situation for people, with the cost of living, isn't helping. We go to the park because it is free and we are all poor because of Medway Council.”

What would help you to improve your health and wellbeing?

We asked people what they think would help them to improve their health and wellbeing. *Figure 6* shows the number of mentions by response. 8 people said, 'don't know/nothing'.

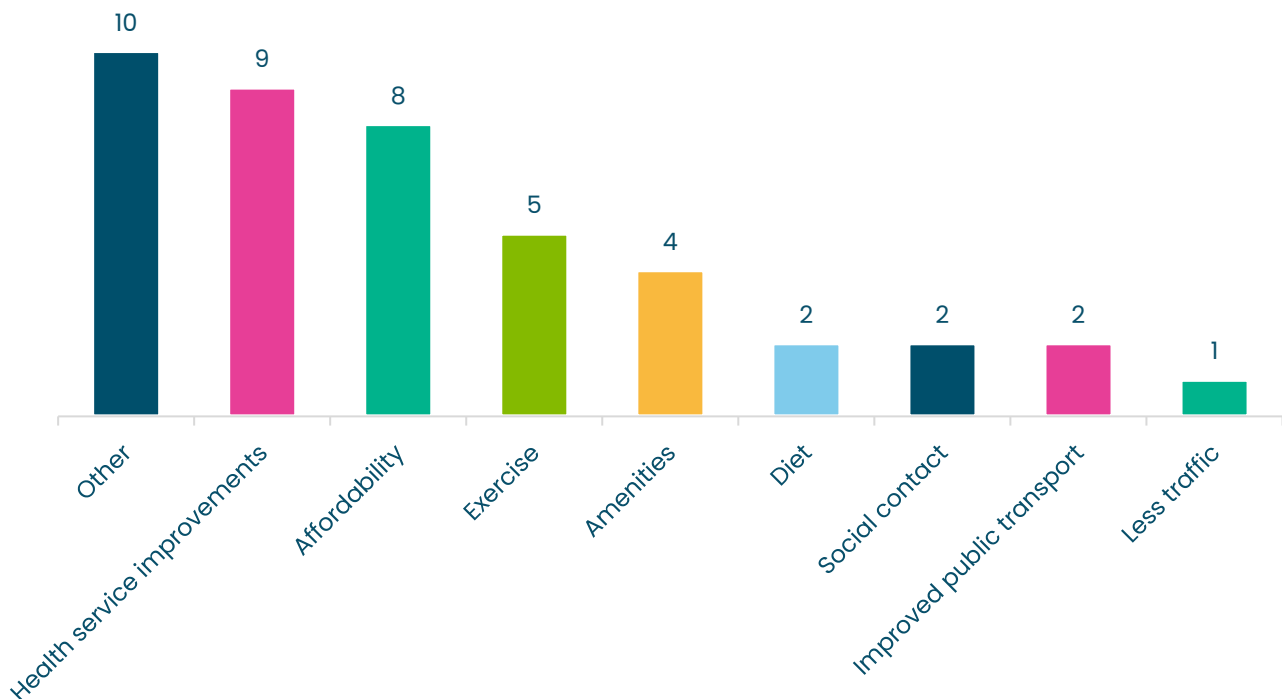


Figure 6 – Number of mentions by response to the question: "What would help you to improve your health and wellbeing?"

Other (10 mentions)

25% mentioned other things that would improve their health and wellbeing, such as more education/understanding and improved mental health.

- "Take care of my mental health."
- "More education about Tourette's and autism especially by teachers and other school staff. I was bullied at school because of the lack of understanding. More awareness and training should be given to staff in health care facilities including Medway hospital around mental health, Tourette's, autism and neurodiversity. Having a zero tolerance on all discrimination in schools, workplaces, nationwide."
- "It would be good to show me how to use an app. I would like to get on-line support. Classes for older aged people."

Health service improvements (9 mentions)

23% mentioned improvements to health services.

- "Having access to a GP, I work shifts and it is almost impossible to get an appointment."
- "Having a chemist locally."
- "More GPs. Getting doctors appointments. Go back to old style of morning and afternoon appointments. Have phone calls, not online to arrange the appointments."

Affordability (8 mentions)

20% spoke about affordability.

- "Having affordable gym membership for everyone and encouraging an outside lifestyle - I'm originally from New Zealand. It is very expensive to go to the gym."
- "Get rid of charges on parks - the money isn't going into the park so they should get rid of them. Reduce membership fees on council run gyms."
- "Lower food prices."
- "A cheap gym within Rainham area. "I pay £40 per month - too much - expensive. "I'd like to see Not so many road works - getting into and out of Rainham is bad."

Exercise (5 mentions)

13% spoke about exercise as a tool to improve their health and wellbeing.

- "Give time to myself for exercise and activities. Try and do more."

Amenities (4 mentions)

10% of people mentioned amenities.

- "I would like a local bank in Rainham" (there may be a bank hub coming but I don't know when)."
- "A gym would be good."

Diet (2 mentions)

5% mentioned diet.

Social contact (2 mentions)

5% mentioned social contact.

- “I used to play basketball but can't find any clubs. I've looked online and on Medway council website, but nothing there – and anything that is there is out of date. More social activities in the area, like festivals, open air concerts and firework nights. There has been a decline in these.”

Improved public transport (2 mentions)

5% mentioned public transport.

- “We live off the main high street of Hartlett. Limited public transport, not every day. So it would help to have public transport increased from only twice per week.”
- “If I could walk properly that would help. If I could get on a bus or train without fearing I'd fall. My scooter is too big for the bus/train, so I am limited to where I can go.”

Less traffic (1 mention)

3% said that less traffic would improve health and wellbeing.

Where do you go to find out information for what is available locally?

We also asked people where they would most likely go to find out information for what is available locally. *Figure 7* shows the number of mentions by response.

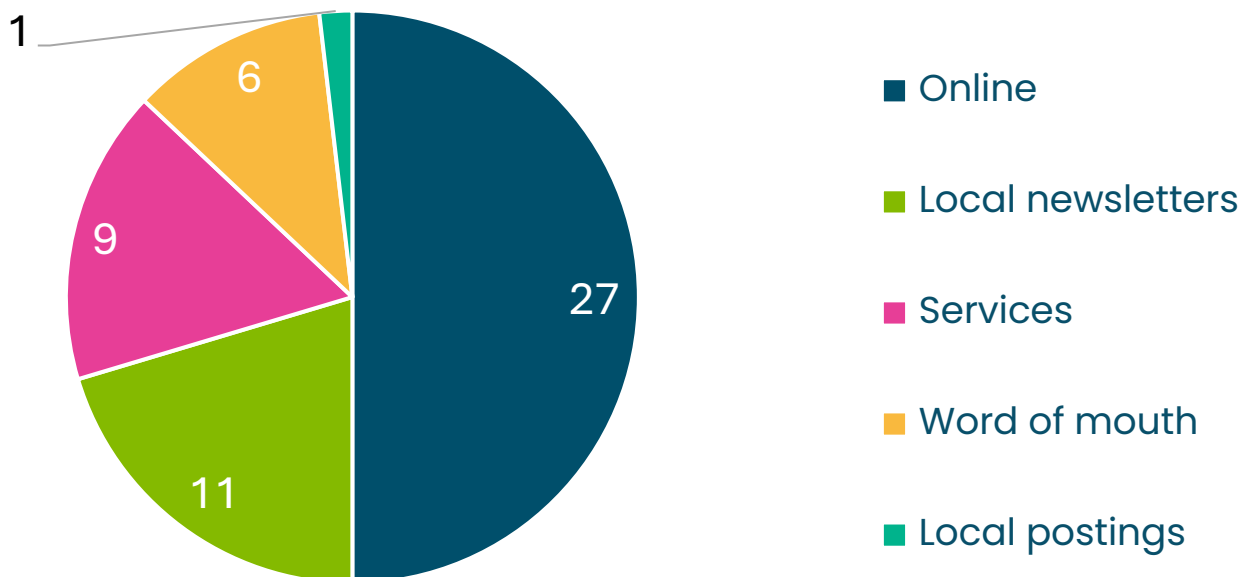


Figure 7 – Number of mentions by response to the question: “Where do you go to find out information for what is available locally?”

Online (27 mentions)

68% of people mentioned they would go online for information about what is happening locally, with **20%** specifically mentioning Facebook sites.

Local Newsletters (11 mentions)

28% get their local information through local newsletters.

- “Local Newsletter – The Net and The Forum (in Rainham).”

Services (9 mentions)

23% said they would look to services to find out local information.

- “There’s the Hub in the library and the healthy living centre.”
- “Contact Centre in Station Road – I can use them to talk to council. The Centre will put you through.”

- “The contact point in the precinct. Its run by the police but they help out with other issues like bin collections.”

Word of Mouth (6 mentions)

15% said that they would find out what is happening locally through word of mouth.

Local Postings (1 mention)

3% find out local information through local postings.

- “Tesco's community board. And many local shops have posters in the windows.”

What could be done to promote health and wellbeing within your community?

We asked people what could be done within their local areas and communities to improve their health and wellbeing. *Figure 8* shows the number of mentions by response theme.

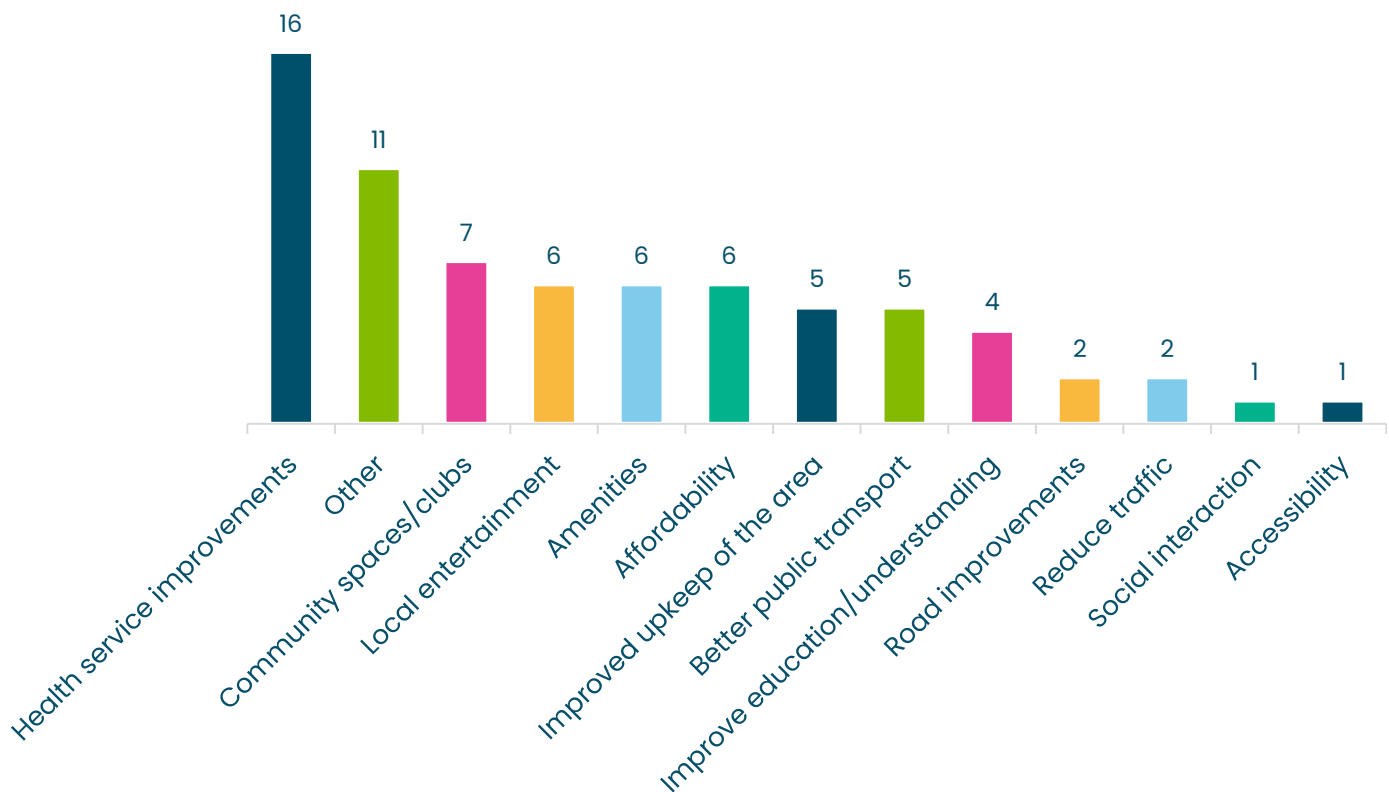


Figure 8 – Number of mentions by improving community wellbeing themes

Health service improvements (16 mentions)

40% of respondents said that improvements to health services would improve community health and wellbeing.

- “When you call the GP they will respond rapidly and get an appointment immediately.”
- “Doctor’s to be open at the weekend. Some of the health facilities could rent out unused rooms to provide alternative therapies such as reflexology or physiotherapy. Private practitioners could even rent some unused rooms.”
- “More pharmacies are needed.”
- “Having ‘wellness’ clinics for older people so you can easily have health checks and blood tests. Staff at the GP surgery making you feel welcome.”

Other (11 mentions)

28% spoke about other ways to improve community health and wellbeing.

- “See more police on the streets walking around.”
- “The fine for fly tipping and littering needs to be increased. Maybe introduce a licence for the electric scooters and bikes like that for a moped.”
- “We need immigration plans – schemes to hire from abroad to fill gaps in the workforce.”
- “Less racism/bigotry/homophobia. More inclusivity.”

Community spaces/clubs (7 mentions)

18% mentioned community spaces/club.

- “I’d run more clubs – particularly more deaf clubs – supporting deaf people and their parents. There also needs to be a youth club in Rainham, one that runs more often than the one in Parkwood.”
- “See somewhere that everyone could go and have fun and enjoy yourself and talk.”
- “There should be more walking groups and sign language groups.”

Local entertainment (6 mentions)

15% mentioned local entertainment.

- “Provide more activities for teenagers to take them away from children’s play areas. At the moment there’s nothing for them to do so they swear and behave badly in parks.”
- “Street parties / local events, little events to bring people together.”

Amenities (6 mentions)

15% mentioned more amenities will improve community health and wellbeing.

- “There are too many vape shops and hairdressers, there needs to be more variety, we used to have a greengrocer where you could get fresh vegetables.”
- “A central contact point, a one-stop shop where you could know to go to for anything you needed. Maybe a library, a GP. Somewhere you know you can get all the information you need and not have to go here, there and everywhere.”
- “Having healthier restaurants – not fast food. Better infrastructure to enable people to get to nicer places and when planning / designing to build nearer to the train stations.”

Affordability (6 mentions)

15% mentioned affordability.

- "Cheaper access to council run facilities – the badminton court costs £45 for a session let alone if you added in swimming at £50."
- "Better financial support for people with disabilities and on lower incomes. More social housing. More accessible costing housing."
- "Lower parking charges would really improve my mental health (as I'd have more money to do other things)."

Improved upkeep of the area (5 mentions)

13% mentioned Improved upkeep of the area

- "Improve the upkeep of parks."
- "Update and improve the town centre of Rainham."

Better public transport (5 mentions)

13% of people mentioned better public transport would improve community health and wellbeing.

- "Better transport to the hospital. Currently it would take half the day on the bus."
- "I think more transport available is important." I can't go out unless I take my husband out (he has dementia)."
- "They need to sort out the buses too – make the timetables work for the public, not the other way round."

Improve education/understanding (4 mentions)

10% mentioned improving education and understanding.

- "I would make sure there was more appropriate education in schools for deaf people – so using British Sign Language, not Makaton, and making sure that it was a part of the curriculum."
- "More emphasis in schools to educate pupils on healthy eating and exercise."
- "Free education on life skills. How to manage their lives, for people willing but don't have the experience or know how."

Road improvements (2 mentions)

5% mentioned improvements to the roads.

- "Improve the roads – fix the potholes."
- "We need to sort out the potholes... they slow you right down and aren't good for your car."

Reduce traffic (2 mentions)

5% mentioned reducing traffic.

- "Stop the traffic. Force lorries around to use the M2 and other bigger roads (the link road)."
- "Cut down the traffic."

Social interaction (1 mention)

3% said that social interaction would improve health and wellbeing for their community.

Accessibility (1 mention)

3% mentioned accessibility.

- "Help the Blind people – get a blind dog for them."

Demographic Breakdown

- **Age:** The least common response was from people aged 10-17 (**3%**). The full range of ages is shown in *Figure 9*.

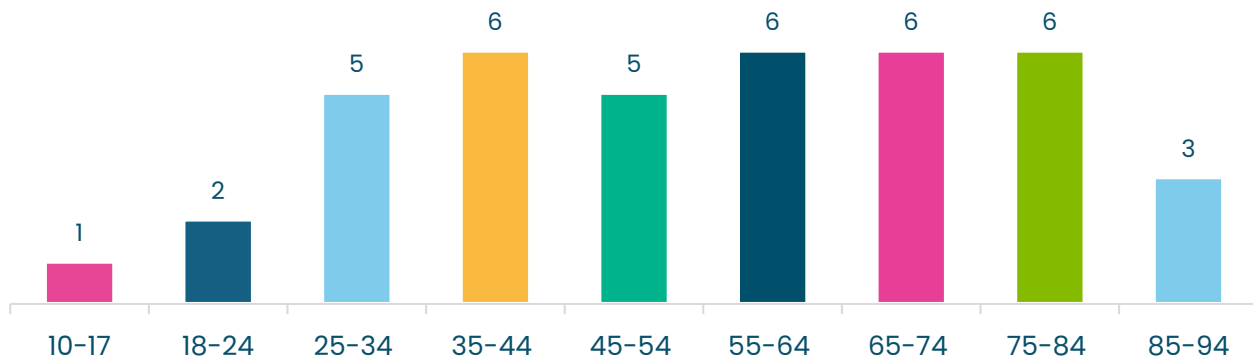


Figure 9 – Number of participants by age

- **Gender:** **57%** of participants identified as female and **40%** identified as male. **3%** did not answer. **95%** of participants' gender identity was the same as their sex recorded at birth.
- **Sexual orientation:** **84%** of participants identified as heterosexual/straight and **5%** identified as gay or lesbian, **5%** identified as bisexual, **3%** identified as pansexual. **3%** preferred not to say.
- **Ethnicity:** **72%** were White/White British, **5%** were Black British, **5%** were African, **5%** were from another ethnic group (Pakistani and Turkish). **3%** preferred not to say and **10%** did not answer.
- **English as a first language:** **95%** of participants told us that English was their first language, **5%** told us that their first language was not English (Urdu and Turkish).
- **Religion:** **45%** of participants told us they have no religion, **35%** told us they were Christian, **5%** told us they were Catholic, **7%** told us that they were Muslim, **5%** told us that they were a spiritualist and **3%** did not answer.
- **Disability:** **20%** reported having a disability.
- **Long-term health conditions:** **33%** of participants reported having a long-term health condition.
- **Mental Health:** **25%** reported experiencing a mental health issue.
- **Neurodiversity:** **10%** identified as neurodiverse and **90%** identified as neurotypical.
- **Carer status:** **28%** identified as a carer.

- **Employment status:** **45%** of respondents were employed, **35%** were retired, **17%** were unemployed, and **3%** were a student.
- **Financial status:** The largest response was from people who told us that they never struggle to pay for basic necessities (**80%**). The full range of financial status responses is provided in *Figure 10*.

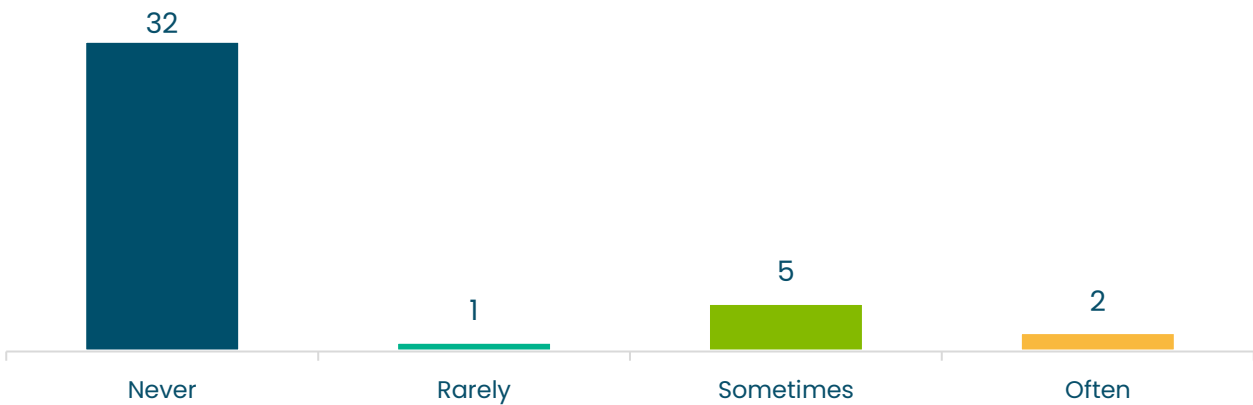


Figure 10 – Number of participants by responses to the question: “In the past six months, have you struggled to pay for basic necessities?”

Insights to Inform

These insights to inform are meant for this series of reports as a whole. There will be 9 reports in this series coming out across 2025, as a follow on from the 9 reports in our 'Medway Areas' series in 2024.

- For Medway Council and the NHS in Kent and Medway to use these insights to inform their work.



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

healthwatch Medway



Online:

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By Telephone:

**Healthwatch Medway Freephone
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By Text:

**Text us on 07525 861 639. By
texting 'NEED BSL', Healthwatch's
British Sign Language interpreter will
make contact and arrange a time to
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