



# Local Transport Insights From Medway Residents

A Healthwatch Medway report

February 2026

# What are Medway residents telling us about local transport?

Between January 2024 and November 2025, Healthwatch Medway spoke to **799** residents across Medway to understand how wider social issues affect health and wellbeing. This report focuses on the **146** individuals who, unprompted, told us their experiences accessing local transport.

**68%** of feedback was **negative**

"[We need] **better transport** for people who don't drive, especially the **older members of our community.**"

"There are not enough transport links and it restricts where we can go."

"Public transport [needs to improve] in this area because **lots of people don't drive.** It's not great, it impacts on people who can't get out as easily as me."



**32%** of feedback was **positive**

"There's good transport, buses are good. Transport to London is good. My family can travel around on public transport."

"The transport is good and you **can get to several other places from here.**"

"I do think [Medway] is a good location for families in terms of schools and transport links."



# What are Medway residents telling us about local transport?

## What are residents saying about bus services?



**64%** of people we spoke to told us about **bus** services.

⊗ **80%** of feedback about buses was **negative**

**34%** of people who talked about the bus service mentioned issues with **reliability** and **punctuality**, with some mentioning it impacting their ability to attend school/work/health appointments on time.

"The **buses can be irregular** or late, no matter what time you try to get one. If I am ten minutes **late for school**, I get detention, even if I left home in plenty of time."

"**The bus service is bad**, I've had a lot of people complain to me that they've had to wait over an hour for a bus. **If you have a doctors or a hospital appointment that's no good at all.**"

"There are no buses - they are only every hour and then every two hours on Sundays. They break down, they don't always turn up. They don't run late so you can't get out after 7pm. **You are stuck. You really need a car to live here.**"

"**The buses are always late** and then on Sunday no early buses before (9am) so **[I am] late for work.**"

📍 **18%** of people who mentioned reliability and punctuality lived in Strood, and **15%** lived in Chatham

**28%** of people who talked about the bus service mentioned issues with **availability** of buses.

"**It'd be lovely to have more buses, more frequently, that run later and that go past 5:00 o'clock on a Sunday**; if you go out, you won't necessarily get back, therefore you do need to have your own means of transport and sometimes I don't want to drive but I have to."

"**I wish we had more than one bus an hour, the buses are a lifeline for us old people.**"

**58%** of people who mentioned availability of buses were **over the age of 65.**

# What are Medway residents telling us about local transport?

## What are residents saying about bus services?

**8%** of people who talked about the bus service expressed concerns about **affordability**.

"It's so expensive...**the fares are so expensive**. I've got adult children and they find it very difficult."

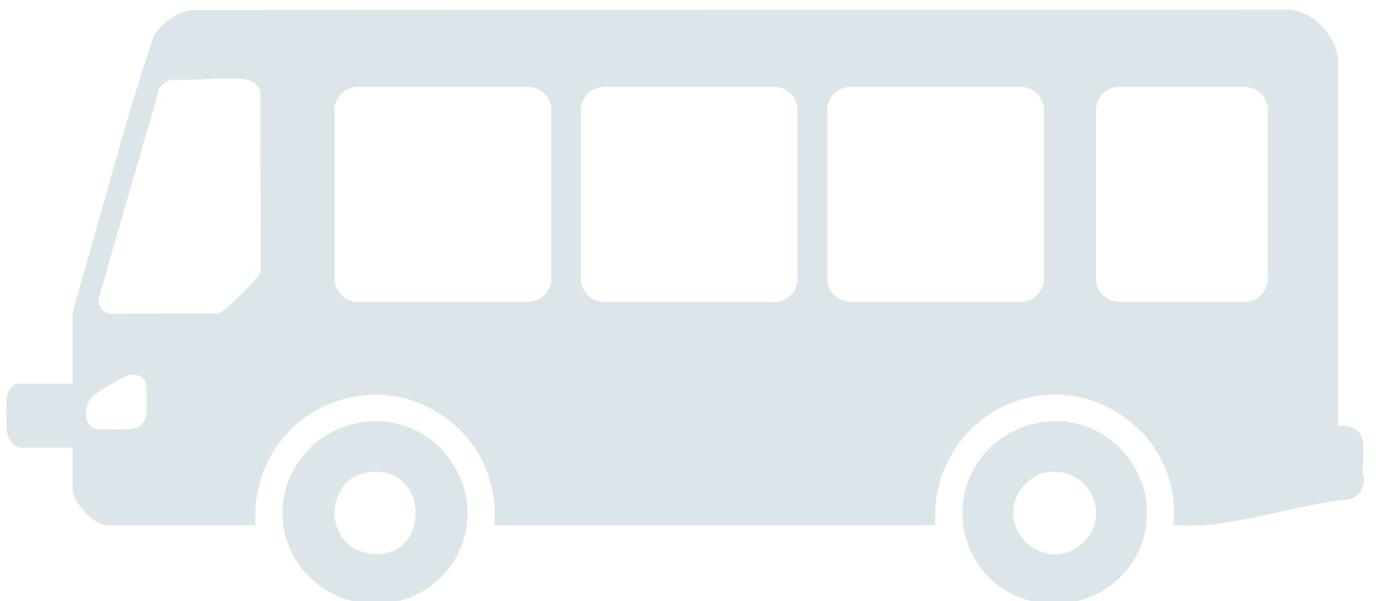
"**The bus here is expensive**, especially if you have children you're travelling with."

**5%** of people who talked about the bus service mentioned issues with **accessibility**.

"My scooter is too big for the bus/train, so **I am limited to where I can go**."

"**The buses are a joke, especially for someone that's disabled. There's not even a proper bus stop, just a pole.** What about the elderly or children. They need to think about people more."

**57%** of people who mentioned issues with accessibility had a disability, long-term health condition, or both.



# What are Medway residents telling us about local transport?

## What are residents saying about travel by road?

 **18%** of people we spoke to told us about **road** travel

 **100%** of feedback about travel by road was **negative**.

**41%** of people who spoke about travel by road mentioned **traffic**.



"Roads are horrendous, **the traffic is awful and I know I will be delayed when going anywhere.**"

"**I can taste the fumes some days.**"

"**[The traffic] causes stress** as there are always temporary traffic lights and there's no alternative route[s]."

"**Traffic management is non-existent**, they close all the major arteries and then wonder why it's all backed up."

**64%** of people who mentioned traffic were from Rochester, Strood and Cuxton.

 **26%** of people who spoke about travel by road mentioned parking.

"Where I live, there are parking issues as too many cars and not enough spaces. It does make me think twice about going out at certain times as I know I won't be able to get parked on my return - **it can limit me going out as it's anxiety-inducing not knowing whether you will be able to parked when you go home.** It does affect me - I am always working out in my head if I will drive or just miss out."

"The parents parking during the school run is awful. Parents are stopping on the side of the road for ages and **it's very stressful for me.**"

# What are Medway residents telling us about local transport?

## What are residents saying about travel by road?

**15%** of people who spoke about travel by road mentioned affordability.



"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.**"

"I can't drive and cannot rely on the buses and **cannot afford a taxi both ways.**"

"**Parking is very dear. I am a blue badge holder and it still costs.**"

**11%** mentioned road quality.

"All these new houses and flats and no road improvements – **potholes are everywhere.**"

**7%** mentioned speeding.

"**People are always speeding** along the Esplanade, **despite the speed bumps**. No one ever gets caught."

**7%** mentioned noise.

"**There can be issues with noise**, people loud cars or motorbikes driving around late at night and causing a lot of noise. **Feels a bit Wild West at times almost.**"

**7%** mentioned roadworks.

"**The roadworks are a nightmare**, especially as I don't drive. **They are everywhere and make public transport journeys take even longer.**"

# What are Medway residents telling us about local transport?

## What are residents saying about train services?



**14%** of people we spoke to told us about **train** services



**67%** of feedback about train services was **positive**, with many residents commenting on train links to London.

"The trains around here are **brilliant**, they are very rarely disrupted and are always on time."

"[There are] **decent train links to London.**"

**14%** of people who spoke about train services mentioned accessibility.

"The new train station in Rochester is freezing - you are exposed to the elements and **there are not many places to sit when you are waiting on the platforms.**"

"If you go to the station to catch a train **you have to go up a lot of stairs.**"

**10%** of people who spoke about train services mentioned reliability.

"Trains are cancelled a lot. You can't rely on [them]."

"Trains get cancelled. I just use taxis all the time now."

# What are Medway residents telling us about local transport?

## CONCLUSIONS

Feedback about local transport suggests that it is **not meeting the needs of the residents that rely on it the most.**

This feedback suggests significant issues with travel by bus and by road. **Older residents, those with disabilities and people living in Strood, Chatham, Rochester and Cuxton are the ones most affected by unreliable public transport.**

**Issues with local transport are contributing to inequalities in access to work, education and healthcare, and causing anxiety and stress for many people living in Medway.**



## DEMOGRAPHICS

### GENDER



**67%** of people who mentioned transport were female

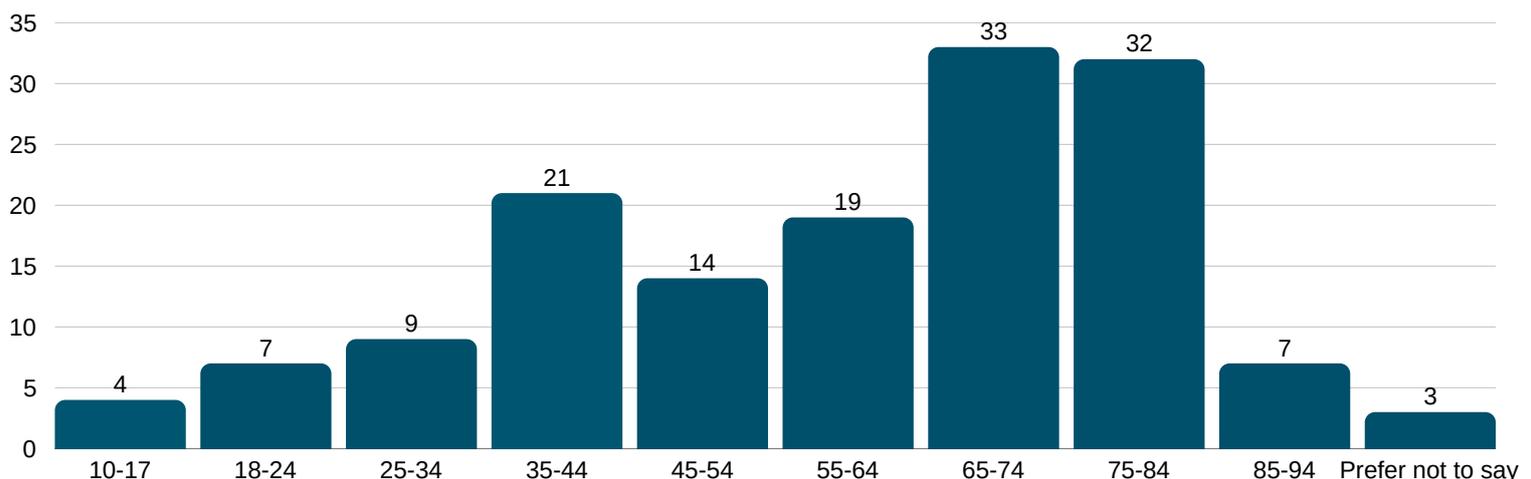
**31%** of people who mentioned transport were male



**1%** were non-binary and **1%** preferred not to say

### AGE

The majority of people who mentioned public transport were aged **65-84.**



# What are Medway residents telling us about local transport?

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### LOCATION

Most people who mentioned public transport were from **Rochester (15%), Strood (14%) and Chatham (12%)**, but there was representation from residents living across Medway.



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 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 meet face-to-face