

## **Colchester Borough Council - Housing and Homelessness Summary July 2015**

*The summary contains key information from the Housing and Homelessness Strategies including the housing stock, housing register, homelessness and housing options service, development of new homes, the housing market, and the private rented sector.*

If any of this information is to be used in any publicity, please contact Karen Paton, Housing Strategy Officer by telephone on (01206) 282275 or email: [karen.paton@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:karen.paton@colchester.gov.uk)

This bulletin will be published quarterly. Information will be updated if available, but please note that some information is only produced annually.

## Housing Stock in Colchester

Type of home	Percentage of total housing %
Owner Occupied with Mortgage	33.7
Owner Occupied without mortgage	31.4
Private rented	16.2
Rented from Colchester Borough Council	9.5
Rented from a Registered Provider	6.5
Shared ownership	0.3
Living in tied accommodation* or rent free	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

\* tied accommodation is accommodation provided as a condition of employment

Source: Census 2011

The table below shows the number of dwellings in Colchester by tenure as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

Local Authority (incl. owned by other LAs)	Private Registered Provider	Other public sector	Private sector	Total
6,130	4,590	970	65,250	76,940

Source: DCLG live tables

### Empty homes

On 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015 there were **1,568** empty homes reported as empty for council tax purposes. **1,486** of these were privately owned or owned by Registered Providers and **82** were owned by Colchester Borough Council.

### Number of homes sold under the Right to buy scheme

Between April 2014 to March 2015 there were **39** Council homes sold to tenants under the national Right to Buy scheme. In the last quarter, April to June 2015 there were **9** council homes sold under the scheme.

## The Housing Register

Colchester holds a housing register of people interested in Council or Registered Provider homes. Households eligible to join the register are assessed according to need and 'banded' as to their priority for rehousing. There are five bands (Bands A - E), depending on the assessed level of housing need.

Not everyone on the housing register will be offered a property. Last year (April 2014 – March 2015) there were only **803** lets of affordable housing compared to over 4000 households on the register.

### Households on the register according to band

Banding	Number of households on register
A	147
B	526
C	1065
D	246
E	2205
<b>Total</b>	<b>4189</b>

*Gateway to Homechoice, 30 June 2015*

### Households on the register according to number of bedrooms required

Number of bedrooms required	Number of households on the register
One	1933
Two	1570
Three	588
Four or more	98
<b>Total</b>	<b>4189</b>

*Gateway to Homechoice, 30 June 2015*

## Lettings of affordable housing

Affordable housing includes both Council owned and Registered Provider homes.

Landlord	Number of homes let April 2014 - March 2015
Colchester Borough Council	415
Registered Providers	388
<b>Total</b>	<b>803</b>

Source: Gateway to Homechoice, 1 April 2015

Registered Providers of social housing are independent societies, bodies of trustees or companies established for the purpose of providing low-cost social housing for people in housing need on a non-profit-making basis. They are also known as 'housing associations'.

Please note this does not include households who have moved through mutual exchange. This is where an existing Council or Registered Provider tenant 'swaps' their home with another tenant.

## Homelessness and Housing advice

The Housing Options team provides free, expert housing advice to residents of all tenures in the borough. The team has a strong focus on preventing homelessness and can advise people with housing problems or assist those people in finding somewhere to live.

For the year 2014 - 2015, the Housing Options service;

- In conjunction with partner organisations, prevented homelessness for **498** households by giving advice on budgeting, defending illegal evictions, negotiating with landlords and helping them secure alternative accommodation
- Accepted a duty under the homelessness legislation for **253** households and helped them into accommodation.

In the last quarter April - June 2015:

- The number of cases where homelessness was prevented was **174**
- The number of households that were accepted as being owed a homelessness duty was **68**

The following table shows the number of households in temporary accommodation by type of accommodation as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

TA snap shot as at:	30th-June 2015
Bed and Breakfast Accommodation	23
Social Housing (Council/RSL Stock)	94
Private Sector Accommodation	26
HALs leased properties	10
Hostel accommodation/Women's refuge	3
Other	0
<b>Total in Temporary Accommodation</b>	<b>156</b>

Source: DCLG P1E information

## Development of new homes

### Number of homes delivered

Between April 2013 and March 2014 a total of **725** new homes were built in Colchester.

Source: Annual Monitoring Report, 2014.

### Number of affordable homes delivered

During the year April 2014 to March 2015 a total of **259** new affordable homes were completed in Colchester. (Please note that this figure is awaiting audit). Areas where these homes were built included; Severalls Hospital site, The Garrison, Brook Street, Stanway and Hawkins Road.

Tenure	Number of homes completed
Registered Provider for renting	253
Shared ownership	0
Homebuy/Firstbuy	2
HOLD – Home Ownership for people with a Learning Disability	2
Mortgage Rescue Scheme	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>

Source: Registered Provider returns

Homebuy Direct is a National scheme for people who could not afford to buy on the open market. It offers equity loans towards the purchase of a new build home on selected newly built schemes.

Firstbuy is a government backed scheme to encourage home ownership. The government subsidises the deposit for first time buyers by providing an equity loan.

## The Housing Market

### House prices in Colchester

Date	March 2014	March 2015
Average price of home	£214,024	£229,556
Lower quartile price	£147,500	£154,000

Source: Hometrack

The table above compares the changes in both the overall average house price and the average lower quartile house price from the previous year. The lower quartile house price is the bottom of the Market - usually smaller homes and flats.

## Housing in the Private Sector

The Private Sector Housing Team has introduced a robust method of monitoring of hazards removed and dwellings improved. The targets for 2014/15 include 300 housing hazards to be removed and 300 dwellings improved.

- The number of service requests from tenants complaining about disrepair in their privately rented property in 2014 – 2015 is: **326**
- For the first quarter of 2015 – 2016, the figure is: **66**
- The total number of serious hazards removed by the PSH team between 2014 and 2015 is: **470**
- For the first quarter of 2015 – 2016, the figure is: **92**
- The total number of dwellings improved by the PSH team in 2014 - 2015 is: **123**
- For the first quarter of 2015 - 16, the figure is: **35**
- Over the last year (2014 – 15) the council needed to serve **10** Improvement Notices for Category 1 and 2 hazards on non-compliant landlords to secure compliance with housing standards and **3** other statutory notices.
- For the first quarter of 2015-16, the figure is: **1** statutory notice.

## Assistance to home owners

Colchester Borough Council administers Disabled Facilities Grants to criteria set out by the Government. In 2014 -15 there were **67** grants paid after completion of works to adapt properties to enable people with disabilities to continue to live in them. During the same period 62 were approved.

In 2014-15 Colchester Borough Council also awarded 8 Home Repair Loans with **10** approved during the same period. This is an income based, 'means tested' loan, secured on the property, and is available to home owners and leaseholders to repair and maintain their property.