

## **Colchester Borough Council - Housing and Homelessness Summary November 2018**

*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.*

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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 2017 (most recent information available).

Local Authority (incl. owned by other LAs)	Private Registered Provider	Other public sector	Private sector	Total
5,980	5,010	970	67,550	79,520

Source: DCLG live tables

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

During 2017-18 there were **46** Council homes sold to tenants under the national Right to Buy scheme. During quarter 1 (April to June 2018) **3** properties were sold under the scheme and during quarter 2 (July to September) **9** properties were sold.

### Empty homes

As at 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018 there were **1,855** empty homes classified as empty for council tax purposes. Of these **1,787** were privately owned or owned by Registered Providers and **68** were owned by Colchester Borough Council. This definition of empty properties is 'Empty, Unoccupied & unfurnished' which includes short term (possibly vacant between moves) and long term (Uninhabitable/subject to Major Works).

## 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 2017 – March 2018) there were only **647** lets of affordable housing compared to nearly **5,000** households on the register.

### Households on the register according to band

Banding	Number of households on register
A	93
B	572
C	1001
D	271
E	2182
<b>Total</b>	<b>4119</b>

*Gateway to Homechoice, 30 September 2018*

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

Number of bedrooms required	Number of households on the register
One	1111
Two	1671
Three	1079
Four or more	258
<b>Total</b>	<b>4119</b>

*Gateway to Homechoice, 30 September 2018*

## Lettings of affordable housing

Affordable housing includes both Council owned and Registered Provider homes. The table below shows the number of properties let during 2017 – 2018.

Landlord	Number of homes let April 2017 - March 2018
Colchester Borough Council	392
Registered Providers	253
Colchester Borough Homes	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>647</b>

Source: Gateway to Homechoice, 31 March 2018

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'.

The table below shows the total number of lettings by applicant type on the Housing register.

Applicant type	Number of homes let April 2016 - March 2017
Direct	195
Transfer	208
Homeless	244
<b>Total</b>	<b>647</b>

Source: Gateway to Homechoice, 31 March 2018

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 Solutions 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 2017 - 2018, the Housing Solutions Team;

- In conjunction with partner organisations, prevented homelessness for **869** 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 **184** households and helped them into accommodation.

In April 2018 a change in homelessness legislation with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, brought a significant change in the way the Housing Solutions Team assess homelessness applications and monitor outcomes.

N.B Due to the change in legislation the information previously provided is no longer being recorded in the same way: Homelessness Prevention and Relief statistics from partner agencies can no longer be added to the Housing Solutions Team statistics, as they were previously, and the criteria for prevention has changed.

- The timeframes used to measure prevention or relief of homelessness under the new legislation (56 days for prevention and a further 56 days for relief) mean that reliable statistics will not be available for at least the first 9 months of 2018-19.
- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has acknowledged that monitoring performance statistics will be difficult for at least the first 6-9 months.

The table below shows the number of cases where a homelessness duty has been accepted and where homelessness has been prevented or relieved for each quarter of 2018 – 2019:

	<b>Qtr 1: April-June 2018</b>	<b>Qtr 2: July-September 2018</b>	<b>Qtr 3: October-December 2018</b>	<b>Qtr 4: January-March 2019</b>
<b>Homelessness households accepted</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>		
<b>Homelessness prevention/relieved</b>	<b>22 prevented 9 relieved</b>	<b>27 prevented 15 relieved</b>		

Source: DCLG P1E information

The Council has a statutory duty under the Housing Act 2002 to provide temporary accommodation to homeless people that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need, whilst they wait for more permanent accommodation to become available.

The following table shows the number of households in temporary accommodation by type of accommodation as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

Type of temporary accommodation:	Number of households as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018
Bed and Breakfast Accommodation	7
Nightly paid privately managed accommodation	4
Social Housing (Council/Registered Provider Stock)	82
Private rented sector housing	0
Housing Leased by Registered Providers	61
Hostel accommodation/Women's refuge	0
Other	0
<b>Total in Temporary Accommodation</b>	<b>154</b>

Source: DCLG P1E information

## Development of new homes

Between April 2016 and March 2017 a total of **912** new homes were built in Colchester and between April 2017 and March 2018 there were **1048** new homes built.

Source: Annual Monitoring Report, 2018.

### Number of affordable homes delivered

During the year April 2017 to March 2018 a total of **134** new affordable homes were completed in Colchester. Areas where these homes were built included; Severalls Hospital site, Wyvern Farm Stanway, the Northern Gateway, Bourne Court, Tiptree and The Garrison.

Type of affordable housing	Number of homes completed
Registered Provider for renting	71
Shared ownership	19
Intermediate Rent	43
Social Rent (CBC)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>

Source: Registered Provider returns

### Affordable Home ownership

The Government has set up a number of schemes to help households into homeownership. Two of the key schemes are Help to buy equity loans (a low interest

loan towards a deposit for a home) and the Help to buy mortgage guarantee (enables you to buy a home with a 5% deposit).

The number of properties bought in Colchester with the support of the Help to buy Equity loans scheme from April 2013 to 31 December 2017 was **1,237**.

The number of homes bought with the support of the Help to buy Mortgage guarantee scheme in Colchester from October 2013 to 31 December 2016 was **312**. This scheme has now ceased.

## The Housing Market

### House prices in Colchester

Date	August 2017	August 2018
Average price of home	£282,046	£286,406
Lower quartile price	£195,500	£200,000

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 (PSH) has introduced a robust method of monitoring of hazards removed and homes improved. The targets for 2014/15 included 300 housing hazards to be removed and 300 homes improved.

Please note that quarterly information is not currently available for Private Sector Housing for 2018-19.

The number of requests from tenants asking the Private Sector Housing Team to investigate disrepair in their privately rented property in 2017–2018 was: **195**.

The total number of serious hazards removed by the PSH team during 2017 - 2018 was: **326**

The total number of homes improved by the PSH team in 2017- 2018 was: **112**

During 2017 – 18 the Council needed to serve **9** Improvement Notices for Category 1 and 2 hazards on non-compliant landlords to secure compliance with housing standards and **9** other statutory notices.

During 2017-18 the Private Sector Housing Team in addition to the above:

- Prosecuted against 4 non-complaint landlords
- Bought back 2 long term vacant properties in to occupation

## Assistance to home owners

Colchester Borough Council administers Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to criteria set out by the Government. In 2017-18 there were **80** grants paid after completion of works to adapt properties to enable people with disabilities to continue to live in them.

In 2017-18 Colchester Borough Council completed **10** Home Repair Loans. 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.