

Colchester Borough Council - Housing and Homelessness Summary

May 2017

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

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
Total	100

* 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 1st April 2015 (most recent information currently available).

Local Authority (incl. owned by other LAs)	Private Registered Provider	Other public sector	Private sector	Total
6,070	4,890	960	65,750	77,670

Source: DCLG live tables

Empty homes

On 8th May 2017 there were 1,506 empty homes classified as empty for council tax purposes. Of these 1,427 were privately owned or owned by Registered Providers and **79** 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).

Number of homes sold under the Right to buy scheme

During 2016 -17 there were **51** Council homes sold to tenants under the national Right to Buy scheme. In the last quarter Jan - March 2017 the number of homes sold under the scheme was **7**.

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 2016 – March 2017) there were only **529** 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	157
B	716
C	1061
D	312
E	2603
Total	4839

Gateway to Homechoice, 31 March 2017

Households on the register according to number of bedrooms required

Number of bedrooms required	Number of households on the register
One	1379
Two	1857
Three	1264
Four or more	339
Total	4839

Gateway to Homechoice, 31 March 2017

Lettings of affordable housing

Affordable housing includes both Council owned and Registered Provider homes. The table below shows the number of properties let during 2016 – 2017.

Landlord	Number of homes let April 2016 - March 2017
Colchester Borough Council	311
Registered Providers	218
Total	529

Source: Gateway to Homechoice, 31 March 2017

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	192
Transfer	129
Homeless	208
Total	529

Source: Gateway to Homechoice, 31 March 2017

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 2016 - 2017, the Housing Options service;

- In conjunction with partner organisations, prevented homelessness for **648** 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 **329** households and helped them into accommodation.

The table below shows the number of cases where a homelessness duty has been accepted and where homelessness has been prevented for each quarter of 2016 – 2017:

	April-June 2016	July-September 2016	October-December 2016	January-March 2017
Homelessness households accepted	124	85	50	70
Homelessness prevention	119	163	174	192

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 31st March 2017.

Type of temporary accommodation:	Number of households as at 31st March 2017
Bed and Breakfast Accommodation	24
Social Housing (Council/Registered Provider Stock)	107
Private rented sector housing	3
Housing Leased by Registered Providers	52
Hostel accommodation/Women's refuge	6
Other	12
Total in Temporary Accommodation	204

Source: DCLG P1E information

Development of new homes

Number of homes delivered

Between April 2015 and March 2016 a total of **933** new homes were built in Colchester.

Source: Annual Monitoring Report, 2016.

Number of affordable homes delivered

During the year April 2016 to March 2017 a total of **100** new affordable homes were completed in Colchester. Areas where these homes were built included; Mile End, Betts Hill, Severalls Hospital site, Stanway, Dedham, Northfields and Hythe Quay.

Type of affordable housing	Number of homes completed
Registered Provider for renting	75
Shared ownership	25
HOLD – Home Ownership for people with a long term Disability	0
Total	100

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 2016 was **843**.

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	March 2016	March 2017
Average price of home	£259,000	£286,000
Lower quartile price	£165,000	£190,000

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 include 300 housing hazards to be removed and 300 homes improved.

The number of requests from tenants asking the Private Sector Housing Team to investigate disrepair in their privately rented property in 2016–2017 was: **208**. The table below shows the number of requests from tenants asking the Private Sector Housing Team to investigate disrepair by quarter during 2016-17:

Time period	Requests from tenants
Quarter 1 (April-June)	46
Quarter 2 (July-September)	38
Quarter 3 (October-December)	59
Quarter 4 (January-March)	65

Source; PSH information

The total number of serious hazards removed by the PSH team during 2016 - 2017 was: **324**

The table below shows the number of serious hazards removed by quarter during 2016–2017:

Time period	Hazards removed
Quarter 1 (April-June)	66
Quarter 2 (July-September)	81 (21 cat 1 hazards)
Quarter 3 (October-December)	100 (16 cat 1 hazards)
Quarter 4 (January-March)	77 (16 cat 1 hazards)

Source; PSH information

The total number of homes improved by the PSH team in 2016 - 2017 was: **158**
The table below shows the number of homes improved by the PSH team by quarter for 2016 - 17:

Time period	Dwellings improved
Quarter 1 (April-June)	26 (11 of which are Cat 1)
Quarter 2 (July-September)	20 (17 of which are cat 1)
Quarter 3 (October-December)	46 (16 of which are cat 1)
Quarter 4 (January-March)	66 (15 of which are cat 1)

Source; PSH information

Over the last year (2016 – 17) the Council needed to serve **7** Improvement Notices for Category 1 and 2 hazards on non-compliant landlords to secure compliance with housing standards and **10** other statutory notices.

The table below shows the notices served by quarter during 2016-17:

Time period	Improvement notices served	Other Statutory notices served
Quarter 1 (April-June)	3	5 Hazard awareness notices
Quarter 2 (July-September)	2 + 1 Prohibition Order (to prohibit the use of a property)	2 Hazard awareness notices
Quarter 3 (October-December)	1	2 notices under the Town and Country Planning Act to improve the visual appearance of a property/garden.
Quarter 4 (January-March)	1	1 Hazard awareness notices

Source; PSH information

Assistance to home owners

Colchester Borough Council administers Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to criteria set out by the Government. In 2016 -17 there were **118** grants paid after completion of works to adapt properties to enable people with disabilities to continue to live in them.

The table below shows the number of DFG's completed for each quarter of 2016-17.

Disabled Facilities Grant	April – June	July – Sept	Oct – Dec	Jan - March
Number completed	18	34	30	36

Source; PSH information

In 2016-17 Colchester Borough Council completed **5** 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.