

## **Colchester Borough Council - Housing and Homelessness Summary October 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.*

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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 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 26<sup>th</sup> October 2015 there were **1,531** empty homes reported as empty for council tax purposes. **1,459** of these were privately owned or owned by Registered Providers and **72** 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 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, April to June 2015 there were **9** council homes sold under the scheme and during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, July to September there were **6**.

## 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	134
B	514
C	1087
D	277
E	2359
<b>Total</b>	<b>4371</b>

*Gateway to Homechoice, 30 September 2015*

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

Number of bedrooms required	Number of households on the register
One	1227
Two	1669
Three	1162
Four or more	313
<b>Total</b>	<b>4371</b>

*Gateway to Homechoice, 30 September 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.

The table below shows the number of cases where a homelessness duty has been accepted and where homelessness has been prevented for the first 2 quarters of 2015 – 2016:

	<b>March-June 2015</b>	<b>July-September 2015</b>
<b>Homelessness households accepted</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Homelessness prevention</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>131</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 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

<b>Type of temporary accommodation:</b>	<b>Number of households as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015</b>
<b>Bed and Breakfast Accommodation</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Social Housing (Council/Registered Provider Stock)</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Private rented sector housing</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Housing Leased by Registered Providers</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Hostel accommodation/Women's refuge</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total in Temporary Accommodation</b>	<b>132</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.

Type of affordable housing	Number of homes completed
Registered Provider for renting	253
Shared ownership	0
Homebuy/Firstbuy	2
HOLD – Home Ownership for people with a long term 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	August 2014	August 2015
Average price of home	£229,249	£257,665
Lower quartile price	£155,000	£168,000

*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 2014–2015 was: **326**

The table below shows the number of requests from tenants asking the Private Sector Housing Team to investigate disrepair by quarter during 2015–16:

Time period	Requests from tenants
Quarter 1 (April-June)	66
Quarter 2 (July-September)	63

Source; PSH information

The total number of serious hazards removed by the PSH team between 2014 and 2015 was: **470**

The table below shows the number of serious hazards removed by quarter during 2015–2016:

Time period	Hazards removed
Quarter 1 (April-June)	92
Quarter 2 (July-September)	89

Source; PSH information

The total number of homes improved by the PSH team in 2014-2015 was: **123**

The table below shows the number of homes improved by the PSH team by quarter for 2015-16:

Time period	Dwellings improved
Quarter 1 (April-June)	35
Quarter 2 (July-September)	42

Source; PSH information

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.

The table below shows the notices served by quarter during 2015-16:

Time period	Improvement notices served	Other Statutory notices served
Quarter 1 (April-June)	0	1
Quarter 2 (July-September)	4	0

Source; PSH information

## Assistance to home owners

Colchester Borough Council administers Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) 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.

The table below shows the number of DFG's approved and completed for the first 2 quarters of 2015-16.

Disabled Facilities Grant	April - June	July to Sept
Number approved	14	6
Number completed	23	15

Source; PSH information



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.

The table below shows the number of Home Repair Loans completed for the first 2 quarters of 2015-16

Home Repair Loans	April - June	July to Sept
Number completed	3	1