

Colchester Borough Council- Housing Trends Quarterly Report – April 2014

Data on the housing market, housing register, new affordable homes and the homelessness and housing options service

This bulletin contains information on Colchester Borough Council's housing service.

If any of this information is to be used in any publicity, please contact Tina Hinson, Housing Strategy Manager on tel: (01206) 506903 or email: tina.hinson@colchester.gov.uk

This bulletin will be published quarterly. Information will be updated if available, however please note 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

Number of empty homes

At 31 March 2014 there were 1639 empty homes reported as empty for council tax purposes. 1535 of these were privately owned or owned by Registered Providers. 104 were owned by Colchester Borough Council.

Number of Right to buy homes bought

Between April 2013 - March 2014 there were 28 Council homes sold to tenants under the national Right to Buy scheme. In the last quarter, December 2013 – March 2014 there were 12 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 2013 – March 2014) there were only 725 lets of affordable housing compared to nearly 4000 households on the register.

Households on the register according to band

Banding	Number of households on register
A	104
B	458
C	1138
D	231
E	2020
Total	3951

Gateway to Homechoice, 1 April 2014

Lettings of affordable housing

Affordable housing includes both Council owned and Registered Provider homes. These are lets to new tenants of affordable housing.

Landlord	Number of homes let April 2013 - March 2014
Colchester Borough Council	444
Registered Providers	281
Total	725

Source: Gateway to Homechoice, 1 April 2014

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 services

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 2013 -14, the housing options service

- Advised 968 households on how to secure their own accommodation or with housing related problems such as rent arrears or an eviction notice
- In conjunction with partner organisations, prevented homelessness for 616 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 197 households and helped them into accommodation.

Development of new homes

Number of homes delivered

Between April 2012 and March 2013 a total of 617 new homes were built in Colchester.

Source: Annual Monitoring Report, 2013. (update not available at this time)

Number of affordable homes delivered

In the year April 2013 - March 2014 a total of 96 new affordable homes were completed

Tenure	Number of homes
Registered Provider for renting	85
Shared ownership	2
Homebuy Direct	9
Total	96

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.

The Housing Market

House prices

Date	December 2012	December 2013
Average price of home	£209,855	£223,128
Lower quartile price	£145,000	£149,995

Source: Greater Haven Gateway Quarterly Housing Report February 2014

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

Assistance to home owners

Colchester Borough Council administers Disabled Facilities Grants to criteria set out by the Government. In 2013-14 there were 56 grants paid after completion of works to adapt properties to enable people with disabilities to continue to live in them. During the same period 70 were approved.

In 2013-14 Colchester Borough Council also awarded 11 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.