

A Guide to the Housing Waiting List



1. THIS GUIDE WILL TELL YOU

- a) Who is eligible to join the Housing Waiting List.
- b) How the Society decides who gets priority for offers of housing.
- c) What to do if you think your application has been treated unfairly.

2. HOW MANY PROPERTIES DOES COLNE HOUSING SOCIETY HAVE FOR RENT?

Colne Housing Society has around 1700 properties for rent across Essex. Whilst that may sound like a lot of properties, we only let, on average, 3 or 4 properties per week.

3. HOW DOES COLNE DECIDE WHO TO OFFER THESE PROPERTIES TO?

The majority of our homes are let to people nominated by their local council. In the case of new developments, the local council nominates all the new tenants to Colne. In the case of some of our village properties, the parish council will nominate a person or family to us.

The small number of vacant homes that we have left, after taking people nominated by the local council, go to either one of our existing tenants who need to move (for example because their home is too small) or, in the case of **Almshouses, Retirement, some Supported and Rural Housing (for older people)** to someone from our housing waiting list. This booklet tells you how we run our housing waiting list, and what type of housing applications get the highest priority.

Our housing waiting list measures applicants' priority for housing through a points scheme. Points are awarded which reflect housing need in terms of overcrowding, health and support issues, and the temporary or insecure nature of the accommodation currently being occupied. We will also look at income and savings to see whether applicants have the resources to house themselves through house purchase or, where available, low cost home ownership schemes such as Homebuy.

Applicants who need general family or single person housing **must** approach their local council as we do not accept these applications any longer.

4. APPLICATIONS THAT WE CANNOT ACCEPT

- a) If you are a home owner or joint home owner, your application will not *usually* be accepted, unless it is clear that you cannot meet your housing needs by selling up and buying a more suitable home. We will accept applications from owner occupiers for retirement and almshouse accommodation, but these will only be considered *after* those who cannot fund private accommodation.
- b) If you have a tenancy with your local council or another housing association, your application will not be accepted unless you require retirement or almshouse accommodation.
- c) Applicants who have rent arrears outstanding from a previous tenancy with the Society, or from a previous tenancy with another Registered Social Landlord, local authority or private landlord or have mortgage arrears, will only have their applications accepted if they have entered into an agreement to repay the debt, and the agreement has been maintained for at least one year. Applicants will be required to provide evidence that an agreement to reduce the arrears has been maintained.
- d) Applicants who are refused because they have rent or mortgage arrears may re-apply after they have maintained a repayment agreement for one year, or have cleared all arrears in full, whichever is the sooner.

- e) Applicants who have had enforcement action taken against them for anti-social behaviour within two years prior to their application and the action has resulted in an ASB order, injunction, possession order or similar will not normally be accepted onto the Housing Waiting List. Applicants will be required to provide evidence that no breaches have occurred. Applicants who are refused on this basis will be able to reapply once two years has elapsed since the order, injunction or similar was granted.
- f) Applicants requiring a property of 2 bedrooms or larger cannot be accepted, regardless of the type of property they require, due to lack of supply.
- g) Applicants applying from HM Prison will not be accepted. Applicants residing in HM Prison should apply to the local authority and NACRO.
- h) Applicants who have previous criminal convictions and there is reason to believe that they are likely to pose a risk to their neighbours and/or the wider community may not be accepted. Examples include where the applicant has been convicted of a violent crime or a crime against children.
- i) Applicants who require additional support in order to meet the conditions of a tenancy will normally be accepted. However, applications will be excluded from the Housing Waiting List where the Society is unable to ensure that appropriate support is available, or the level of support required would seriously undermine the Society's ability to support other residents in the area.

5. DECIDING WHO GETS PRIORITY – THE POINTS SYSTEM

1) Overcrowding

Points are given where your home does not have enough bedrooms for your family size. It is assumed that applicant's homes should meet the following standard:

- A living room which is not used for sleeping.
- A bedroom for each person 16 years or over, or for a married or co-habiting couple.
- A bedroom shared by no more than 2 children of the same gender. The children should have an age gap of less than 5 years.

Using these rules we will work out what size property you need and compare it with where you live now. Points are awarded as follows:

NO OF ADDITIONAL BEDROOMS REQUIRED	POINTS
1 Additional Bedroom	10
2 Additional Bedrooms	20

2) Sharing with Other Households

Points are awarded if you have to share basic facilities with another household. This means where you are sharing facilities with people who are not going to be re-housed with you. We will not award points for sharing facilities if an applicant has always lived at home with their parents. Points are awarded as follows:

CATEGORY	POINTS
Sharing bathroom and/or kitchen and/or living room	10

3) Housing and Your Health

Points are awarded if:

- Your health, or a member of your household's health, is significantly worse than it would be if you moved to a more suitable home, or

- A long term disability means that your quality of life would be improved by a move to a home more suited to your particular needs.

We require medical evidence of the above from your GP, Hospital Specialist, Social Worker or other health professional before we can consider awarding medical points. The medical evidence must confirm how your housing circumstances are making your medical condition worse, and/or how a move to alternative accommodation will improve your medical condition.

We cannot award medical points without this evidence. Points are awarded as follows:

PRIORITY	POINTS
Serious	25
Moderate	15
Mild	0

4) Moving to Give or Receive Support

If you need to move to be able to give or receive support because of a health problem or disability, supporting evidence will be required which shows that the care/support is required from or by the applicant or a member of their household and that the location and type of the existing accommodation adversely affects the provision of that care or support.

Evidence can be provided by your GP, Hospital Specialist, Social Worker or other health or support professional before we decide on whether to give any support points. **We cannot award support points without this evidence.** Points are awarded as follows:

PRIORITY	POINTS
Serious	25
Moderate	15
Mild	0

5) Tied, Temporary or Insecure Accommodation

We award points under this heading when you are going to have to leave your home under the following circumstances:

- Employees in Tied Accommodation – if you have been given notice by your employer that you must your home due to retirement, or your employment is ending for another reason.
- Serving members of the Armed Forces – if you are living in armed forces accommodation and your confirmed date of discharge is in less than a year's time.
- Young Adults in Care – if you live in a care or foster home and must leave as you are aged 16. Tenancies to under 16 and 17 year olds are only offered with a guarantor and appropriate support in place.
- Tenants in Private Rented Accommodation – if you have privately rented accommodation for at least three years. Landlord references are required to cover the whole of the three year period.

Points are awarded as follows:

CATEGORY	POINTS
Living in tied accommodation and issued with a notice to vacate.	20
Applicants in HM Forces Accommodation with a leave date of 12 months or less.	20
Living in a care or foster home and with a leave date as aged 16.	20
Living in private rented accommodation for at least 3 years.	20

6) Harassment (including racially motivated harassment), Abuse & Violence

If you feel that you need to move because you are being harassed and/or are suffering, or at risk of, violence, your application must be supported by another organisation e.g. the Police, Social Services, or another housing organisation. . We will then decide on whether additional points should be given. We will not discuss your situation with the agencies involved unless we receive your written consent to do so.

Points are awarded on a scale of 10 to 50, depending upon the seriousness of the case.

7) Waiting Time

10 points will be awarded for each full year you are on our Housing Waiting List.

6. WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE BEEN TREATED UNFAIRLY

We aim to provide a quality service to our tenants and other customers. If you think that we have not assessed your application properly or have any other complaint about the way we have dealt with your application, you should in the first instance write to the Customer Services Manager detailing the reasons why you disagree with the assessment.

If you are not satisfied with the response then you should write to the Housing Director. If you are still dissatisfied, your case will be considered by the Chief Executive and finally by the Society's Board. A full copy of Colne Housing Society's complaints procedure is available from our office on request.

Together with your application form, you should have also received a copy of the Housing Corporation's 'A Charter for Housing Association Applicants and Residents'. This sets out the general standards that social landlords such as Colne Housing Society have to meet.

7. OTHER INFORMATION – GENERAL POINTS TO CONSIDER

Colne Housing Society is a relatively small provider of housing. Whilst we will try to help, the small number of vacancies we have means that in most cases, we will not be able to provide you with suitable housing.

As well as applying to Colne Housing Society, you should also register with your local council. In most cases, you will stand a better chance of success.

Please keep us up to date with your circumstances – particularly if you move. We will ask you to renew your application regularly. If you do not respond to letters from us we will take your name off the list.

If you think you will need housing within a few weeks or months then you must seek formal advice – you should approach your local council and ask for their housing advice team/officer. Alternatively, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Shelter Essex and Suffolk can also give valuable help and advice. Do not leave it until it is too late.

8. OTHER HOUSING ORGANISATIONS THAT MAY BE ABLE TO HELP OR ADVISE YOU

Name of Organisation	Address	Telephone Number & Web Site Address
Anchor Trust (Sheltered Housing only)	The Granary, Park Old Barnes, Swafham Bulbeck, Cambridge CB5 0NA	08456 031139 www.anchor.org.uk
Chelmsford Borough Council	Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1JE	01245 606606 www.chelmsfordbc.gov.uk

Name of Organisation	Address	Telephone Number & Web Site Address
Colchester Borough Council	Housing Division, PO Box 887, Town Hall, Colchester, Essex CO1 1ZG	01206 282565 or 282569 www.colchester.gov.uk
Estuary Housing Association	Centre Place, Prospect Close, Southend on Sea, Essex SS1 2JD	01702 614321 www.estuary.co.uk
Guinness Trust (Sheltered Housing only & LA Nominations)	Greenwood House, 91 London Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 OPP	01245 496773 www.guinesstrust.org.uk
Hanover Housing Association (for those over 55 years only)	8 Moores Walk, High Street, St Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 1DB	01480 475069 www.hanover.org.uk
John Grooms Housing Association (Disabled Adapted properties)	50 Scrutton Street, London EC2A 4PH	020 7452 2000 www.johngrooms.org.uk
Maldon District Council	Princes Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 5DL	01621 854477 www.maldon.gov.uk
Moat Housing Group (Sheltered Housing only & LA Nominations)	The Square, Holloway Road, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex CM9 4LH	01621 841180 www.moat.co.uk
Ogilvie Charities (Sheltered Housing only & LA Nominations)	The Gate House, 9 Burkitt Road, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4JJ	01394 388746
Salvation Army Housing Association	Sophia House, 214-218 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4NP	01277 240 610 www.saha.org.uk
Sanctuary Housing Association (Sheltered Housing only & LA Nominations)	4 Websters Court, Websters Way, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8JQ	01473 213342 www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk
Shaftsbury Housing Association (Sheltered Housing only & LA Nominations)	90C Broomfield Road, Chelmsford Essex CM1 1SX	01245 495944 www.shaftsburyhousing.org.uk
Springboard Housing Association (Sheltered Housing only & LA Nominations)	2a Claughton Road, Plaistow, London E13 9PN	020 8548 2500
Tendring District Council	Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton on Sea, Essex CO15 1SE	01255 425501 www.tendringdc.gov.uk

www.housingcare.org

This site aims to help older people make decisions about where to live, and any support or care they need.

If you have any questions about your application or our policy please contact us:

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