



Colchester
Borough
Homes

HOMELESSNESS NEWSLETTER

Spring 2024



MEET & GREET EVENTS

Colchester professionals are being invited to participate in a series of upcoming "Meet and Greet" events aimed at fostering connections, networking opportunities, and knowledge sharing within the local community. The initiative seeks to provide a platform for professionals to learn more about the various organisations operating in the area and engage in meaningful discussions.

The proposed events are envisioned to be concise, lasting approximately an hour each, with a spotlight on one organisation at a time to showcase their work and interact with attendees. Before moving forward with the initiative, organisers are seeking to gauge the interest and feasibility of such gatherings among professionals in Colchester.

Professionals were urged to share their thoughts and ideas regarding the format and content of the events to ensure they are tailored to meet the needs and interests of the community. Additionally, an invitation was extended to those interested in showcasing their organisation or specific projects, encouraging them to reach out to Gintare Petrauskaite at gintare.petrauskaite@cbhomes.org.uk

Stay tuned for further updates on these networking opportunities within the Colchester professional community.

SPEAK UP FOR SANCTUARY TRAINING

There is an upcoming opportunity organised by City of Sanctuary for a free online training session.

The program aims to empower individuals who may have limited experience in advocacy to recognise their potential in effecting change. Specifically, it focuses on advocating for refugee rights and fostering inclusive and compassionate communities.

The training comprises a 1.5-hour webinar accompanied by a comprehensive handbook filled with valuable information, resources, and practical exercises. During the webinar, participants will have the chance to engage in breakout sessions, facilitating idea exchange and collaborative planning with fellow organisers and campaigners.

If you are interested in participating, please follow the link below to book your spot:

<https://cityofsanctuary.org/events/speak-up-for-sanctuary-training-programme-3/>

For general enquiries, please contact the teams via the details below and we will respond to you within 5 working days.

Homelessness: housing.solutions@cbhomes.org.uk | Duty Line: 01206 580 290

Gateway To Homechoice: housing.evidence@cbhomes.org.uk | Duty Line: 01206 580 292

Temporary Accommodation: cbh.accommodationteam@cbhomes.org.uk | Duty Line: 01206 580 291

Duty to Refer: dutytorefer@colchester.gov.uk



Colchester Borough Homes



your own place

INTRODUCTION

- **Commission:** To provide **Pre-tenancy Money & Tenancy sustainment** skills, knowledge, confidence, resilience and connections **through workshops and/or one-to-ones.**
- **Aim of the project:** To reduce the risk of **tenancy failure** after move on and improve access to **move-on housing.**

WHAT
HAPPENED?
OCTOBER -
DECEMBER
2023



3
locations



9
days

“ Co-location time in the services where Your Own Place will **build relationships of trust with both staff and residents to understand and embed our offer into their move-on pathways and tailor content.** ”

Sanctuary
Supported
Living



Chinook
Highwoods,
Colchester
CO4 9XT



116 Queen
Elizabeth Way,
Colchester
CO2 8PE

emmaus
Colchester



175 Magdalen
St, Colchester
CO1 2JX



We created a **Commitment Agreement** between Your Own Place, Emmaus and Sanctuary Supported Living. Staff members at each location read, signed and agreed to shared principles.



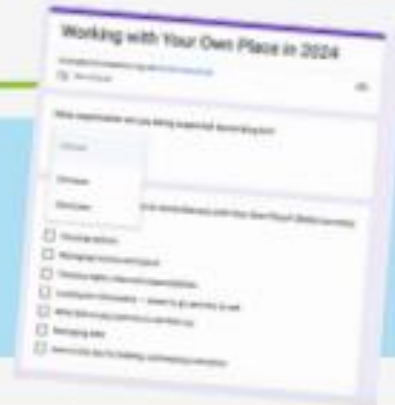
Colchester Borough Homes



your own place

What we've done so far

We **designed a short survey** to capture the opinions and experiences of the people we're meeting at Emmaus and Sanctuary Supported Living. We go through the questions conversationally with **Companions, residents and staff members**.



36
survey
responses



14

Emmaus
Companions



5

Emmaus
Team members



12

Sanctuary
Residents



5

Sanctuary
Team members

Of the people who would like to work with us:

People who said
they'd like to
work in **groups**



83%

Emmaus
Companions

55%

Sanctuary
Residents

People who said
they'd like to
work **one-to-one**



93%

Emmaus
Companions

91%

Sanctuary
Residents



WHAT WE HEARD

A summary of responses we heard from Companions, residents and staff about the practicalities what would work best for them for delivery of support.

nearly

100%

of trainees recommend our workshops

These answers are **based on people's expectations of previous training** that they have attended — those experiences may not have been entirely positive. Whilst getting people to our workshops requires one set of messaging, once they are in, **their experience is usually better than even they expect.**

We have **84% retention on our workshops**, showing the strength of our approaches and relationships.

84%



Session length

- 48% said they'd like the sessions to be **2 hrs**
- 40% said they'd like the sessions to be **1 hr**
- 12% gave answers varying from 3 hours to 1 day



Session time

(more than one answer could be selected)

- 48% Said they'd like the session to take place between 2 - 5pm
- 18% Before 11am
- 42% Said they'd like the session to take place between 11 - 2pm
- 12% After 5pm

Session topics

We asked what topics would be best to focus on, and for other suggestions:



79%
Housing options



61%
Managing debt



73%
Managing income & spend



55%
Looking for information — where to go and who to ask



64%
Tenancy rights, roles and responsibilities



55%
How to bid — tips for bidding and how to keep motivated



64%
What bills to pay and how to set them up



Packing and moving, options for private renting, getting a guarantor, getting ID



Centre for Homelessness Impact

Disability and Homelessness in the UK

Join for an online event exploring the significant barriers faced by people with disabilities in accessing support and exiting homelessness.

A report published by the Centre for Homelessness Impact last year reveals that there are consistent higher levels of physical disabilities and health conditions among people experiencing homelessness.

The report authors, Dr Beth Stone, a lecturer in Disability Studies at the University of Bristol, and Emily Wertans, a researcher at the University of Leicester, identified barriers to getting support and exiting homelessness including difficulty getting a diagnosis, unsuitable environments, and a shortage of accessible housing.

The online event will begin with a short presentation from Beth and Emily, followed by a panel discussion and audience Q&A. Confirmed speakers include:

- Chair: Dr Nadia Ayed, Evidence Lead at the Centre for Homelessness Impact
- Dr Beth Stone, a lecturer in Disability Studies at the University of Bristol
- Emily Wertans, a researcher at the University of Leicester
- Henry, Lived Experience Associate
- Ella Tansey, Case Worker at The Bridge Homelessness to Hope
- Keith Neville, Case Worker at The Bridge Homelessness to Hope

Register to join the event here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/disability-and-homelessness-in-the-uk-tickets-823837840157>

WAITING WELL

Are you or the people you support waiting for healthcare treatment or surgery? Waiting Well gives you help and support while you wait. Waiting Well is a FREE support and guidance group for adults on a waiting list.

Dates: Thursdays

Time: 10.30am - 11.30am

Venue: One Colchester Community Hub, 4-6 Long Wyre Street, CO1 1LH

Find out more and visit the website here:

<https://www.community360.org.uk/blog/are-you-waiting-for-healthcare-treatment-or-surgery/>

Or contact Emily Wingate at Community360 for more information;

Email: information@community360.org.uk **Phone:** 01206 505 250



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housing.solutions@cbhomes.org.uk

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cbh.accommodationteam@cbhomes.org.uk

Duty Line: 01206 580 291

Duty to Refer:

dutytorefer@colchester.gov.uk



If you would like to find out more about the work that the Rough Sleeper Team does, arrange a visit, or shadow the Outreach Team, please contact our Manager, Andrew Grimwade:
andrew.grimwade@cbhomes.org.uk

GATEWAY TO HOMECHOICE

From November 2023 to January 2024 the total number of applications on the Gateway to Homechoice register by band and bed need were as follows:

NOVEMBER 2023 - JANUARY 2024

By banding and bedroom need

BANDING	BEDROOM NEED:						GRAND TOTAL
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
A	18	57	14	8			97
B	140	51	355	101	3	1	651
C	500	180	69	13	1		763
D	119	67	36	6	1		229
E	359	401	113	7			880
F	1	1					2
GRAND TOTAL	1137	757	587	135	5	1	2622

The number of lets per property size for November 2023 to January 2024 were:

By number of bedrooms:

No. of bedrooms	No. of lettings
1 Bed	77
2 Bed	82
3 Bed	35
4 Bed	4
Studio	5
GRAND TOTAL:	203

Applicants can use the Average Waiting Time function in the Property Search section of the Gateway To Homechoice Website, [HERE](https://www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk/PropertySearch).

This can be edited to an applicant's specific property requirements.

Anybody can access this, and you do not need a Gateway To Homechoice account.



You can find out more about the Gateway To Homechoice and Average Waiting Times by visiting the link below:

<https://www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk/PropertySearch>

HOUSING SOLUTIONS

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) became law on the 3 April 2018. It changes how we help people who are – or may become – homeless within the next 56 days. We will work with you where possible to prevent you from becoming homeless, and to reduce the need for temporary or emergency housing.

The type and level of help depends upon your personal situation, but we'll always provide you with advice and assistance wherever possible.

You can complete a 10 minute online assessment (Enhanced Housing Options Wizard) which will provide advice and guidance tailored to your current situation. It will give you the next steps that you should take to address your current situation and if you are homeless or threatened with homeless in 56 days and are unable to help yourself you will be able to self-book an appointment with a Housing Solutions Officer at a date and time to suit your needs.

If you do not have access to a smart phone/computer and/or the internet you can contact the Housing Solutions Team on 01206 580290 Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm, who will provide you with advice and assistance on how to book an appointment. In the Colchester area we have asked all of our partners to automatically refer their customers to us if they meet the criteria and assist them where needed to complete the EHO.

If you are unable to complete the online assessment and are already engaged with services, you may be able to complete this with the assistance of your support worker. Some public bodies will also have a

duty to notify the Council if they are aware that you are threatened with homelessness within 56 days or are currently homeless.

If you have not got a support worker, you can telephone our customer service centre on 01206 282569 to find out where you can find support to enable you to complete this form and any enquires about accessing the housing solutions service.

You can email the Housing Solutions Team at:
housing.solutions@cbhomes.org.uk

More information on additional help and eligibility for help can be found on the website:

<https://cbhomes.org.uk/find-a-home/homelessness/>

And further information, advice and assistance for hospital leavers, prison leavers, care leavers, veteran support, victims of domestic abuse, mental health support and substance misuse and more can be found on the website here:

<https://cbhomes.org.uk/find-a-home/homelessness/advice-and-assistance/>



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ESSEX FELLAS FORUM

The Essex Fellas Forum, set up by Healthwatch Essex, enables men from all walks of life to get together monthly. It provides a pressure-free environment for men to discuss their physical and mental wellbeing and more.

Over the past year, they have created [this video](#) of some of their activities, and the impact of the group on the fellas who are in it.

Learn more about the group, refer those you support or join in yourself. Contact Dan Potts, Engagement Manager, and founder of The Essex Fellas Forum, by email daniel.potts@healthwatchessex.org.uk

Or visit the website here:

<https://healthwatchessex.org.uk/2023/07/a-year-of-success-for-healthwatch-essex-essex-fellas-forum/>



If you are concerned about a rough sleeper, please don't walk by. Contact StreetLink:



Send an alert via
www.streetlink.org.uk



Or download the free
app for Apple and
Android devices

COUNSELLING AVAILABILITY REMINDER

The LIFE-FORCE Counselling Centre are currently offering a low-cost Counselling Service for people who could benefit from therapeutic counselling with one of their mature student counsellors on placement.

If you think this service may be of use to your clients or would like more information, please contact the LIFE-FORCE Counselling Centre on T: 01206 791 661 or email: info@lifecycle-centre.co.uk

Alternatively, more information can be found online at: www.lifecycle-centre.co.uk



**LIFE-FORCE
Therapeutic
Counselling Service**
Established Since 1994

Low-Cost Counselling
£9.50 per session

For adults aged 18 years & above
with trainee counsellors

Are you struggling with daily life?
Do you feel talking in confidence could help you?
Could you benefit from professional, emotional support?

- ★ Anxiety
- ★ Depression
- ★ Stress
- ★ Anger
- ★ Divorce
- ★ Relationships
- ★ Abuse
- ★ Loss
- ★ Trauma

- You can refer yourself to LIFE-FORCE by completing our [online Counselling Enquiry Form](#)
- Or you can leave a message on the number below
- You can usually get an appointment within a week, at a convenient time.

www.lifecycle-centre.co.uk

Telephone: LIFE-FORCE 01206 791661

Confidential Out-of-Hours Answerphone Service

LIFE-FORCE 3 East Hill, Colchester, CO1 2QL
e-mail info@lifecycle-centre.co.uk



More information can be found on the
HOMESTEP scheme here:

<https://cbhomes.org.uk/other-services/landlord-offer-homestep/>

CENS UPDATE

New Project Opening to Help Tackle Surge in Demand

Colchester Engagement & Next Steps (CENS) are excited to announce that they are adding another facet to their project.

Our main CENS project currently has 15 single rooms with ensuite facilities for people experiencing homelessness and we run at almost 100% capacity throughout the year.

We identified a lack of provision for move on housing of a good standard which was also affordable so in 2019 we purchased the house next door “Al’s Annexe” which provides 4 spaces for people with low support needs. They are able to stay for 6 months and take employment whilst paying a low rent whilst enables them to save for a rental deposit on more permanent housing, which we will match.

This is an excellent incentive for people to engage and work with us to move forward in their lives. We support them with a “hand holding” approach to independent living and this has proved massively successful. So much so, that we purchased a second property with 4 bedsit rooms and 2 self-contained studio flats. This opened on 16th February 2024 and offers supported living accommodation for people who are able to live more independently than those in the main project but again, require our “hand holding” client lead approach adopted from our 1st move on accommodation.

We are fortunate enough to have secured funding from The government’s NSTF to fund a new support worker who will work 1 to1 with residents across all three projects. We are really pleased to have the opportunity to work more closely with residents and help to tackle the issues that cause their homelessness, increasing their resilience and ability to maintain a long term tenancy before they are housed.

In the main CENS project, demand is higher than ever with referrals doubling in the last year. This has forced us to start a waiting list policy, something that we have never wanted to do, but the only way to ensure referrals are treated fairly.

We are seeing residents stay with us for longer due to the increase in demand across the system, but are pleased that our positive move on percentages are still increasing, the current quarter so far has a 91% positive rate.

We remain very grateful for the co-operation of our partner agencies as we work together to tackle homelessness in the town.



If you would like to find out more about the work that the Rough Sleeper Team does, arrange a visit, or shadow the Outreach Team, please contact our Manager, Andrew Grimwade:
andrew.grimwade@cbhomes.org.uk



TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS

We're thrilled to share that Colchester Borough Homes has been accredited by Tpas, the national tenant engagement organisation, for our exceptional work in tenant involvement!

The award was formally presented to us on 5th February 2024. This recognition highlights our commitment to putting our tenants at the heart of everything we do.

Through a rigorous process involving staff and tenant volunteers, we've demonstrated a strong culture of involvement and empowerment. The input has been invaluable in shaping our decisions and improving our services.

Find out more about Tpas here:

<https://www.tpas.org.uk/our-accreditations>



LOCAL MENTAL WELLBEING SUPPORT IN COLCHESTER

Navigating mental wellbeing support just got easier. Tribe is a resource for a growing list of local services, community groups, events, activities, and volunteering opportunities in Colchester.

Whether you're seeking support services, helplines, financial wellbeing advice, or fun activities like inclusive fitness or arts and crafts groups, Tribe has you covered.

Find the right support by searching on the website or app from the iOS App or Google Play Store. Explore the diverse community listings in Colchester and find out more on the website here: <https://tribeproject.org/search/results>



REMINDER - NHS Employment and Retention Support in Primary Care IPSPC (Individual Placement and Support Primary Care)

The new IPSPC employment and retention support service within primary care is now live.

This new primary service is running alongside the existing secondary IPS service and will be continuing. The new primary care service will be supporting tenants that are under primary care and are looking for support with employment and or employment retention. Referrals can be made by staff within supported housing and tenants can self-refer by emailing our central inbox.

IPSPC Primary Care Eligibility Criteria:

- Working age 18+
- Has a mental and or physical illness that has lasted 12 months or is likely to last for 12 months. (Disability act 2010)
- If unemployed wants to start paid work, either now or any time in the future.
- Not accessing existing employment support and not on certain other DWP programmes.

For more information, digital leaflets or a referral form please contact via the below:

Referral inbox for North and Mid Essex:

epunft.ipsinprimarycare@nhs.net

Referral inbox for South and West Essex:

epunft.refer@nhs.net

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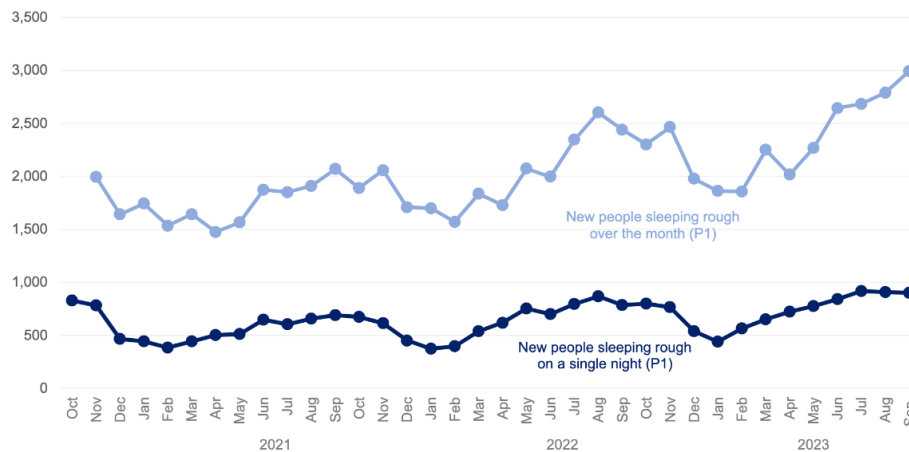
Temporary Accommodation: cbh.accommodationteam@cbhomes.org.uk | Duty Line: 01206 580 291

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Rough Sleeping Snapshot 2024



February was an important one for data releases that quantify the scale of types of homelessness in England and their underlying trends.

On Thursday 29th February, results of the annual rough sleeping snapshot in England will be published by the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities. This is the estimate of the number of people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2023. After four years of decreases, last year's snapshot saw the first rise since the peak in 2017. Regrettably, all the signs are that this upward trajectory will continue and that the figures are likely to make very bleak reading.

This annual snapshot is an important data set that allows us to compare numbers and trends of people sleeping on the streets in England over time as the same methodology has been used since 2010. Although it has limitations, it thus holds value. Guillermo Rodriguez, our Director of Evidence and Data, joined a local count as an independent verifier in the autumn and describes how the data is collated in this post. Find more information here: <https://www.homelessnessimpact.org/news/seven-hours-rough-sleeping-snapshot>

On 29th February we will also see more granular quarterly data on rough sleeping in England using the data-led framework developed by the Centre for Homelessness Impact, a group of 'Early Adopter' local authorities and DLUHC.

These indicators help local authorities track progress towards preventing rough sleeping or otherwise ensuring it is rare, brief, and non-recurring. They capture in each area the number of new people sleeping out; the number sleeping rough after leaving an institution such as prison, care, or asylum accommodation; the total number sleeping rough; how many have experienced long-term rough sleeping; and how many have returned to sleeping on the streets.

On the same day we will see latest data on the estimated number of people living in temporary accommodation in England who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness. Again, the number has been rising, in this case almost consistently since 2010, and has more than doubled in this period.

We will analyse the trends beneath these data sets when they are published. They remind us of the urgency of our mission, to seek a better evidence-led understanding of what works to prevent and relieve homelessness, to support people to put these insights into practice, and thereby improve people's lives.



USEFUL CONTACTS & INFORMATION



Homelessness

Duty Line: 01206 580 290

Gateway To Homechoice

Duty Line: 01206 580 292

Temp Accommodation

Duty Line: 01206 580 291



Write To Us

1st Floor Rowan House

33 Sheepen Road

Colchester

Essex

CO3 3WG



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Duty to Refer: dutytorefer@colchester.gov.uk



Alternatively, you can speak to us in person at our Housing Office in Greenstead.

It is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9:00am – 4:00pm.

If you wish to meet us outside of these times, you will need to call us to make an appointment.

The Greenstead Housing Office is located next to the Community Centre at:
Hawthorn Avenue. Greenstead, Colchester, CO4 3QE

If you are concerned about a rough sleeper, please don't walk by. Contact StreetLink:



Send an alert via
www.streetlink.org.uk



Or download the free
app for Apple and
Android devices

Thanks for reading, see you next time!