

Clearing the home of someone close to you can be hard; take it one step at a time. For executors and administrators, and the solicitors and estate agents who support them, clearing a home in Colchester after a death. General guidance, not legal or tax advice.

Last checked 28 September 2026. Online version with links to every source: <https://www.colchesterclearance.co.uk/house-clearance-checklist-executors>

1. First steps (before anything is removed)

- ☐ Death registered. In Essex, register within 5 days of being contacted by the Medical Examiner's office (Essex County Council).
- ☐ Government told, using Tell Us Once where available (GOV.UK).
- ☐ Clear who has authority to act (executor or administrator) and whether probate is needed.
- ☐ Will checked for specific gifts of items; those items set aside.
- ☐ Family and beneficiaries told a clearance is planned and asked about personal items.

2. Secure the property

- ☐ All keys accounted for (neighbours, carers, family, estate agent).
- ☐ Buildings and contents insurer told; any unoccupied-property conditions noted.
- ☐ Colchester City Council told for council tax. A property may be exempt while waiting for probate or letters of administration, and for up to six months after.
- ☐ Utility suppliers told; meter readings taken and photographed. Post redirected to the executor.

3. Search for documents and valuables

- ☐ Original will and codicils (if not held by a solicitor).
- ☐ Deeds, bank and savings statements, share certificates, Premium Bonds, pension and insurance papers.
- ☐ Cash, jewellery, watches, keys, passports, driving licence.
- ☐ Photos, letters and items of sentimental value.
- ☐ A list and photos of items of value, for the estate valuation.

4. Value the contents

- ☐ GOV.UK: household and personal items (antiques, electrical goods, furniture, jewellery, paintings, collections) are part of the estate, which must be valued before applying for probate.
- ☐ If inheritance tax is owed: report within one year (IHT400); pay by the end of the sixth month after the death to avoid interest.
- ☐ GOV.UK: don't make financial plans or put property on the market until you've got probate.
- ☐ Record kept of what was sold, given away, kept and disposed of.

5. Reuse and recycling

- ☐ Good furniture and electricals offered for reuse first (charity shops, or the Love Essex reuse directory). A collecting charity should be a lower tier registered waste carrier (GOV.UK).
- ☐ Sofas, armchairs and other upholstered seating flagged: they may contain POPs and have special handling rules (Environment Agency).
- ☐ Small loads: Colchester tip at Shrub End (booked slots). Listed bulky items: council special collection.

6. Choosing who clears the property

- ☐ Firm checked on the Environment Agency public register of waste carriers (upper tier; numbers in England start CBDU).
- ☐ Written quote: rooms, loft, garage, shed, garden; items to leave; sweep-out.
- ☐ Asked where waste and reusable items will go.
- ☐ Keys, parking and access agreed in writing. Items firms often can't take (asbestos, gas bottles, chemicals) flagged.
- ☐ Final walk-round (or photos) before keys are handed back.

7. After the clearance

- ☐ Final meter readings; suppliers and insurer updated.
- ☐ Estate agent told the property is clear, once you have authority to market it.
- ☐ Receipts and disposal records kept with the estate papers.

Items to keep, sell, give or clear

Item / room	Keep (who)	Value / sell	Donate	Clear

Contacts and key dates

Who / what	Details	Date
Solicitor / probate practitioner		
Estate agent		
Key holder(s)		
Council tax notified		
Insurer notified		
Waste carrier (name and CBDU number checked)		
Clearance date / final walk-round		

Notes

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Sources (checked 28 September 2026)

- GOV.UK: [what to do when someone dies](#); [Tell Us Once](#); [applying for probate](#); [valuing the estate](#); [paying inheritance tax](#)
- Essex County Council: [register a death](#)
- Colchester City Council: [council tax exemptions](#); [special collection](#)
- GOV.UK: [dispose of household waste](#); Environment Agency: [waste upholstered domestic seating containing POPs](#)
- Environment Agency: [public register of waste carriers, brokers and dealers](#)
- Love Essex: [Colchester Recycling Centre](#); [reuse directory](#)

Colchester Clearance is an introduction service. We pass clearance enquiries to independent registered waste carriers, who quote and carry out the work. We don't carry out clearances or accredit firms; the checks in this list are for you to make. Free to print and share, but please keep this source line: <https://www.colchesterclearance.co.uk/house-clearance-checklist-executors>