



JULY 2017

London's
**EMERGENCY
SHELTERS**

PROGRESS REPORT: 2011 – 2016

PREPARED BY: **HOMELESS PREVENTION | NEIGHBOURHOOD, CHILDREN, AND FIRE SERVICES | CITY OF LONDON**

London's Emergency Shelters Progress Report: 2011 – 2016

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Homeless Prevention
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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

London's Emergency Shelters Progress Report: 2011-2016 examines the use of London's emergency shelters between 2011 and 2016. The analysis of billing data over this six-year period provided an opportunity to consider trends in emergency shelter use in London. The results help inform the development of solutions to address, reduce, and prevent homelessness in London.

LONDON'S HOMELESS PREVENTION SYSTEM

The City of London's Homeless Prevention System is a coordinated and integrated Housing First approach, centred on both individuals and families. This approach is outcome focused and designed to address, reduce, and prevent homelessness in London.

Under London's Homeless Prevention System, emergency shelters contribute to solving homelessness through prevention, diversion, and rapid re-housing. The focus is on moving out of shelter versus moving in, reducing the number of individuals relying on emergency shelters, and implementing an integrated homeless management information system. Through these efforts, and the integration of the other elements of the System, it is anticipated there will be a reduction in the length of emergency shelter stays and a reduction of year-over-year emergency shelter use.

EMERGENCY SHELTERS: A DEFINITION AND OVERVIEW

Emergency shelters play an important role in the continuum of services available to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. An emergency shelter is intended to provide immediate, short-term accommodation and basic needs for individuals and families experiencing a housing crisis.

In London, emergency shelters provide a bed, basic needs, and some support to individuals and/or families who are experiencing homelessness, and are aimed at meeting immediate, short-term needs. Mission Services of London, The Salvation Army Centre of Hope, and Unity Project for Relief of Homelessness in London receive funding through the City of London to operate emergency shelter beds for individuals and families experiencing a housing crisis.

At the time of this report, the funding to emergency shelters was based on a per diem model for individuals and families staying in shelter.

METHODOLOGY

APPROACH TO DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data was collected through the invoices submitted for the use of emergency shelter beds funded by the City of London between 2011 and 2016. Data from the following four emergency shelters was used to complete this report:

- Men's Mission and Rehabilitation Centre, Mission Services of London
- Rotholme Women's and Family Shelter, Mission Services of London
- The Salvation Army Centre of Hope
- Unity Project for Relief of Homelessness in London

Violence Against Women (VAW) emergency shelters, including Women's Community House and Zhaawanong Shelter, do not receive funding from the City of London Homeless Prevention. VAW shelters, therefore, do not report on emergency shelter use directly to the City of London and are not included in this report.

Crash bed data is also not included in this report. While partially funded by the City of London, the nature of crash beds is different than that of emergency shelters.

Information from emergency shelter bed invoices was compiled and examined to identify unique individuals. Data was then analyzed at the total, aggregate level for each year of billing information. Statistics were compared across each year from 2011 to 2016 to understand trends in the data.

The results include both families and single adults. It was found that some adults accessed Rotholme Women's and Family Shelter as a family and other emergency shelters as a single adult. Therefore, all adults were included in the results, regardless of the emergency shelters they accessed.

DATA LIMITATIONS

Billing data from emergency shelters was used to prepare this report. Billing data provided sufficient data to conduct a trend analysis. However, it is not without some limitations, such as:

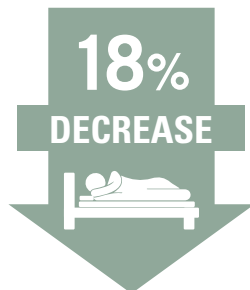
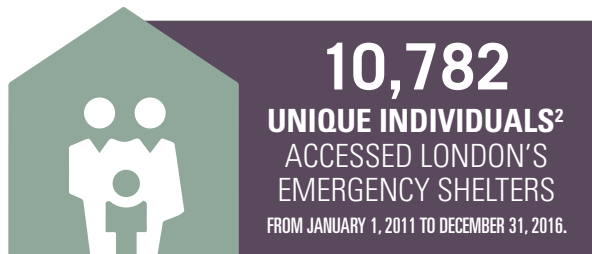
Data Quality. Data recording inconsistencies, such as inconsistent spelling of an individual's name, different birth dates recorded for the same individual, and inconsistent formatting of how dates were recorded were found in the original data set. Data omissions, such as a missing health card number, Social Insurance Number, or gender, also provided a challenge to the data analysis process. A thorough data cleaning process was conducted to prepare a complete data set for analysis.

Double Booking. According to the billing data, there were a few individuals registered in two different emergency shelters on the same night, meaning their number of visits and number of nights stayed were overcounted. As a result of this double booking, some individuals were reported as staying at an emergency shelter more than 365 days in the year. To better understand long-term shelter use and the extent of double booking, data was analyzed to identify the number of individuals who stayed in shelter more than 11 months (over 335 days), exactly 365 days, and over 365 days.

Data Source. The source of invoices used to create the data set for the report only included emergency shelters in London and did not include VAW emergency shelters. Between 2015 and 2016, Women's Community House served 629 unique individuals, representing 443 women and 186 children.¹ Some women and children who stay at VAW emergency shelters may also access the other emergency shelters in London, and therefore may be included in the report analysis. However, those who only accessed VAW emergency shelters are not included in this report. Therefore, the report is limited in being able to provide a complete picture of homelessness in London, particularly for women and children experiencing homelessness.

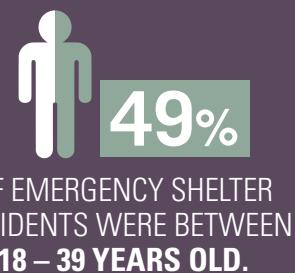
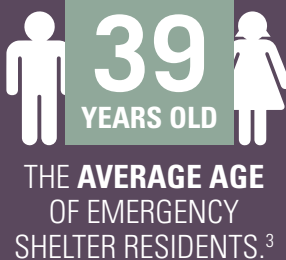
¹ Women's Community House. (2016). 2015/16 Annual Report. Retrieved from <http://shelterlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/WCH16-AnnReport-8p-WEB.pdf>

A Snapshot OF THE DATA



18% DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF **UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS** ACCESSING EMERGENCY SHELTER, FROM **3,400** IN 2011 TO **2,777** IN 2016.

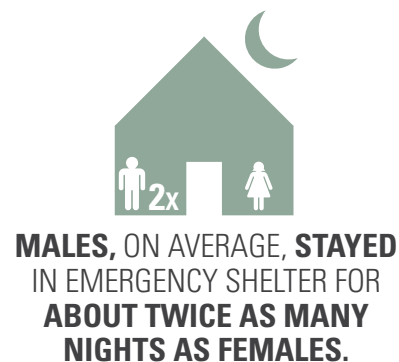
DECREASE IN THE YOUNGEST AGE OF INDEPENDENT YOUTH ACCESSING EMERGENCY SHELTER.



76% OF EMERGENCY SHELTER RESIDENTS **WERE MALE** AND **24%** **WERE FEMALE.**⁴



DECREASE IN SHELTER RESIDENTS STAYING **25 OR FEWER NIGHTS** AND AN **INCREASE** IN SHELTER RESIDENTS STAYING **26+ NIGHTS.**



21% INCREASE IN THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF NIGHTS STAYED IN EMERGENCY SHELTER, FROM **34** NIGHTS IN 2011 TO **41** NIGHTS IN 2016.

² Includes dependent children and youth.

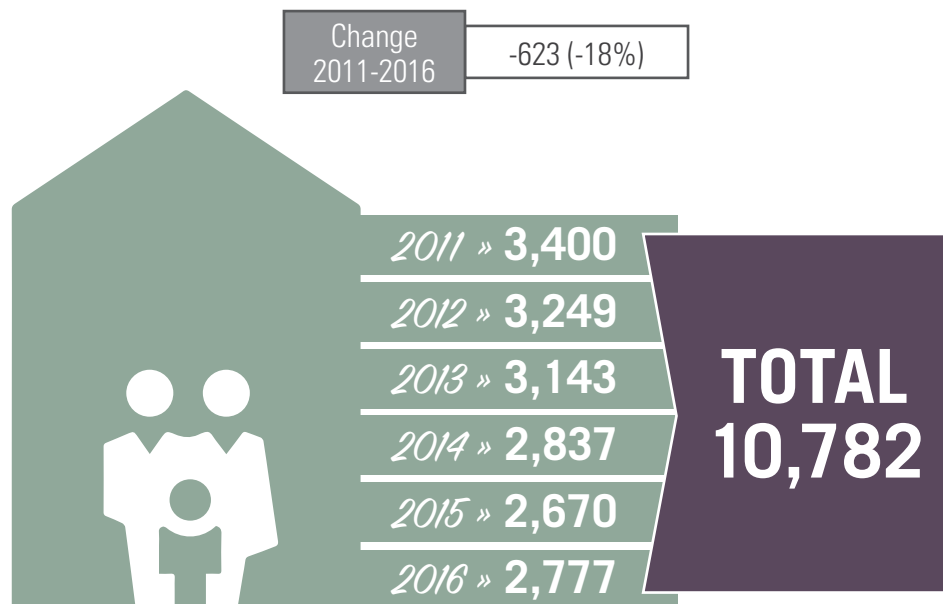
³ Excludes dependent children and youth.

⁴ Where gender was reported.

WHO IS USING LONDON'S EMERGENCY SHELTERS?

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ACCESSED EMERGENCY SHELTERS

Over a six-year period, from January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2016, 10,782 unique individuals accessed London's emergency shelters. This number includes both adults and dependent children and youth.⁵



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Between 2011 and 2015, the number of unique individuals accessing emergency shelter decreased each year, and then increased in 2016. There were 623 fewer individuals accessing emergency shelter in London in 2016 (2,777 individuals) than in 2011 (3,400 individuals), representing an 18% decrease.

Of the individuals who accessed emergency shelter in 2016, 45% were new shelter users who had not accessed emergency shelter in any previous year.

⁵ 10,782 represents the total number of unique individuals who accessed emergency shelter over a six-year period from 2011-2016. The yearly totals are also representative of unique individuals, but only for the specific reporting year. Some individuals accessed emergency shelters in multiple years. Therefore, the sum of individuals accessing emergency shelters in 2011 (3,400 individuals), 2012 (3,249 individuals), 2013 (3,143 individuals), 2014 (2,837 individuals), 2015 (2,670 individuals), and 2016 (2,777 individuals) is higher than the six-year total of 10,782.

PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN ACCESSING EMERGENCY SHELTERS

Between 2011 and 2016, the distribution of adults and children accessing emergency shelter has generally remained the same.

Approximately three times as many adult males accessed emergency shelter, compared to adult females. About one-tenth of individuals who accessed emergency shelter were dependent children and youth.

Although the number of individuals accessing emergency shelter has decreased overall since 2011, the number of dependent children and youth accessing emergency shelter has remained constant.



66%
WERE ADULT MALES



21%
WERE ADULT FEMALES



11%
WERE DEPENDENT CHILDREN AND YOUTH

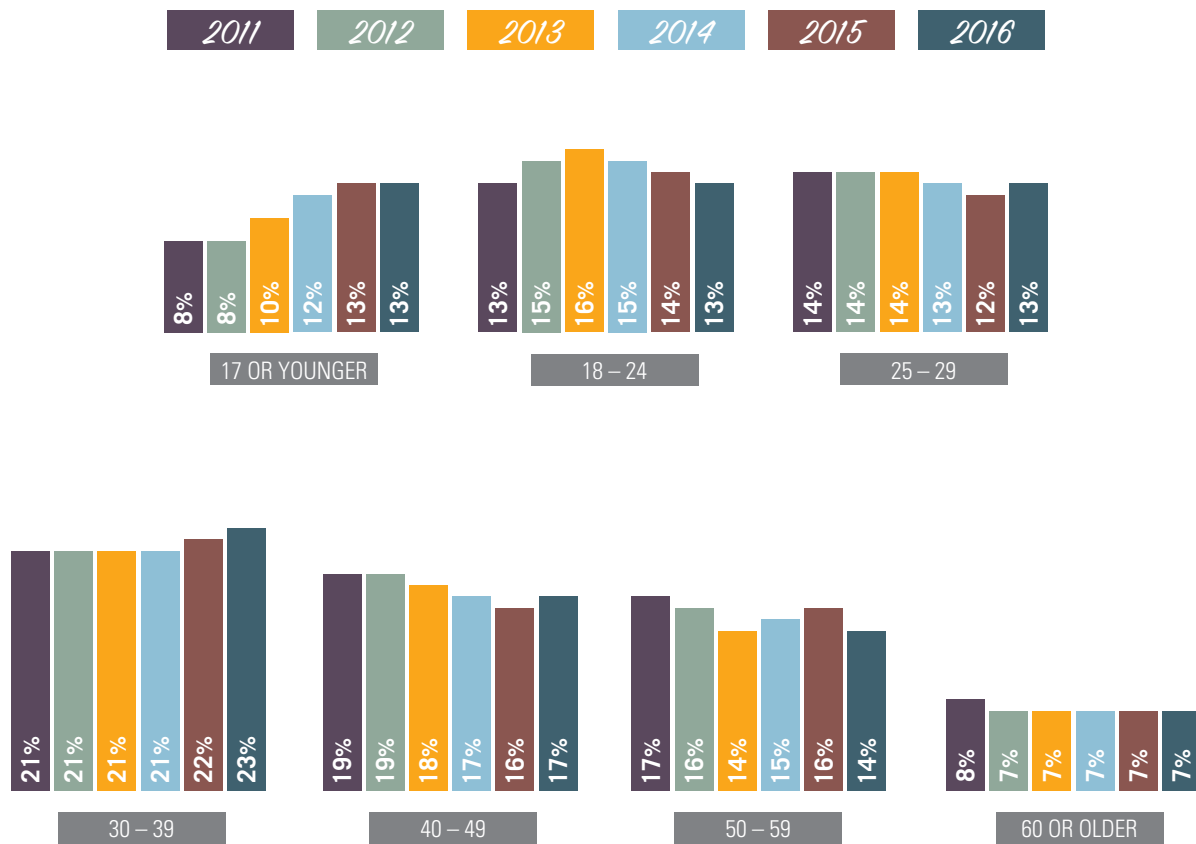


2%
DID NOT REPORT THEIR GENDER

AGE

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF EMERGENCY SHELTER RESIDENTS

Since 2011, the age category with the greatest increase was individuals aged 17 or younger,⁶ which increased from 8% in 2011 to 13% in 2015 and remained at 13% in 2016. The age category with the greatest decrease since 2011 was individuals 50-59 years old, decreasing from 17% in 2011 to 14% in 2016.



Individuals aged 30-39 have consistently represented the largest percentage of individuals, comprising between 21% and 23% of all emergency shelter residents since 2011. Individuals aged 60 years and older have consistently represented the smallest percentage of individuals, comprising approximately 7% of all emergency shelter residents since 2011.

⁶ Includes dependent children and youth.

AGE RANGE AND AVERAGE AGE

YEAR	YOUNGEST AGE	AVERAGE AGE	OLDEST AGE
2011	18	39	96
2012	17	38	84
2013	16	39	87
2014	15	39	95
2015	16	39	82
2016	16	39	83

The age of the youngest independent individual to access emergency shelter decreased each year between 2011 and 2014, from 18 to 15 years old, before increasing in 2015 to 16 years old, where it remained in 2016.

The age of the oldest individual has varied each year, with an overall decrease from 96 years old in 2011 to 83 years old in 2016. The average age of emergency shelter users has generally remained consistent since 2011 at 39 years old.

GENDER

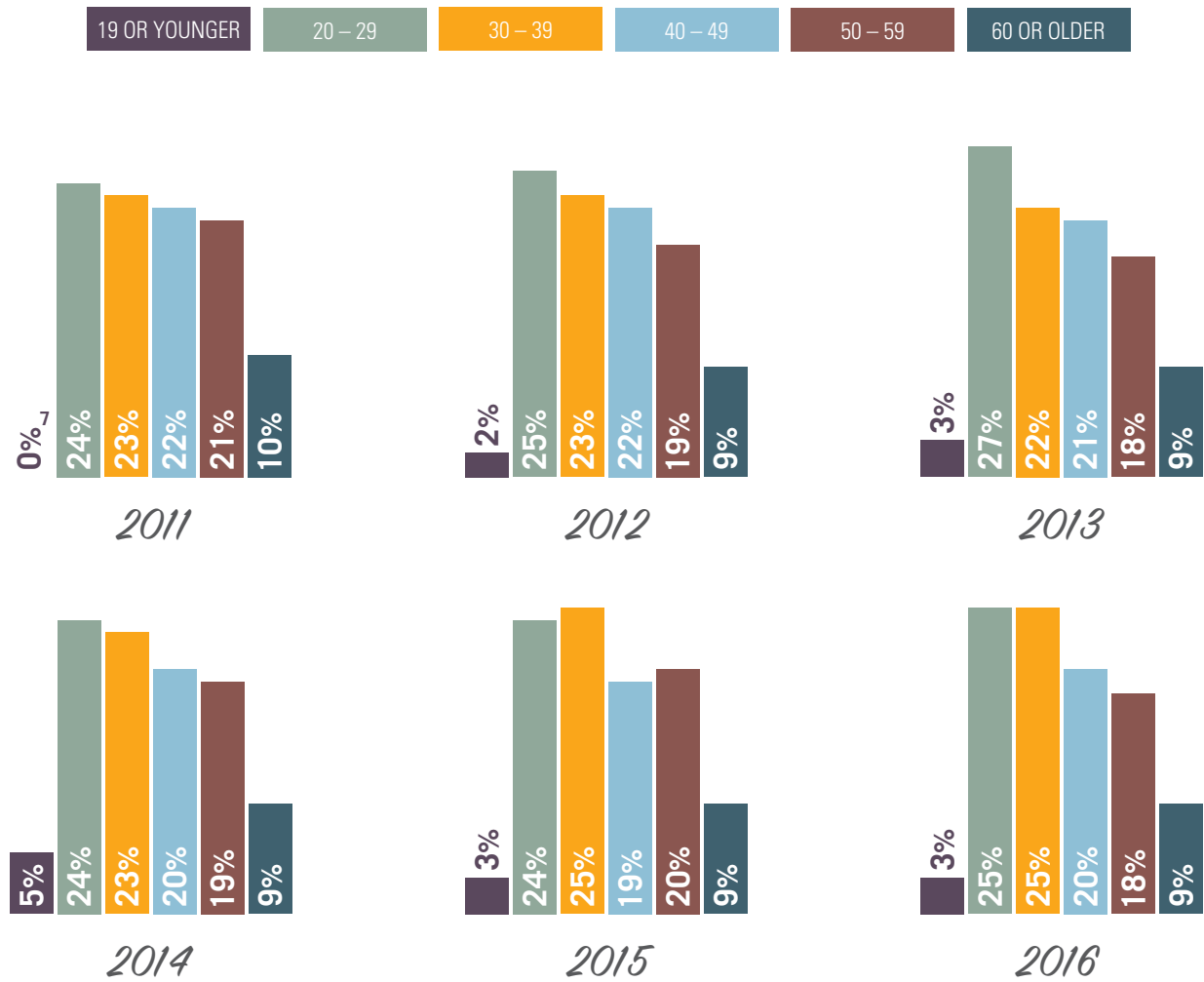
GENDER OF ADULTS ACCESSING EMERGENCY SHELTER

Between 2011 and 2016, the ratio of adult males to adult females accessing emergency shelter has remained consistent, with adult males comprising approximately three quarters and adult females comprising approximately one quarter of emergency shelter residents.



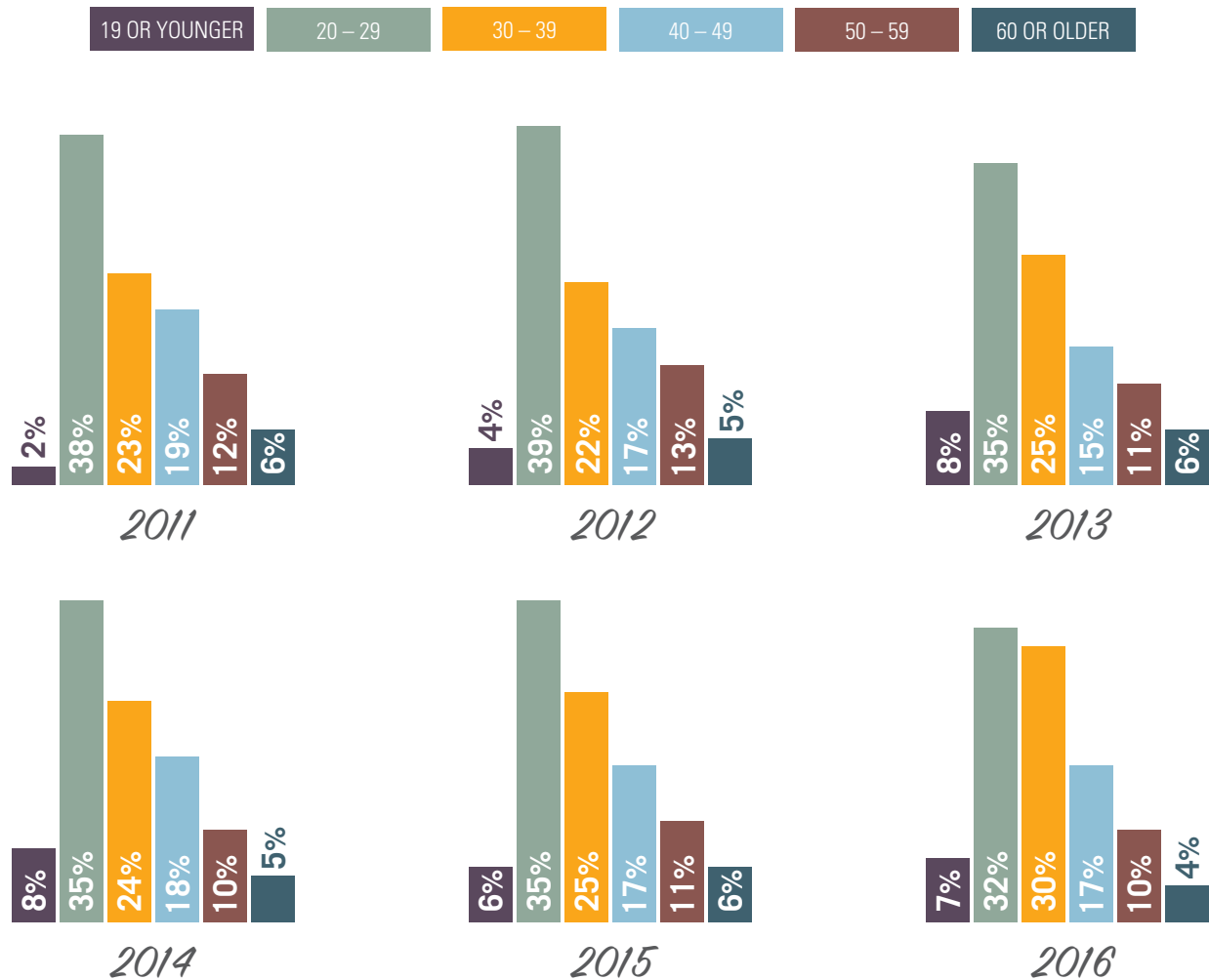
GENDER AND AGE DISTRIBUTION

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INDEPENDENT ADULT MALES



⁷ A total of eight adult males were aged 19 years or younger; however, due to rounding, this shows as 0%.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INDEPENDENT ADULT FEMALES




Between 2011 and 2016, the distribution of adult males across each age category of emergency shelter users has remained fairly consistent. Although the distribution of adult females over 40 years old has remained consistent, the distribution of adult females under 40 years old has changed.


Between 2011 and 2016, the percentage of females 20-29 years old decreased from 38% to 32%, while the percentage of females aged 19 or younger increased from 2% in 2011 to 7% in 2016. Further, the age category of females 30-39 years old experienced the greatest increase between 2011 and 2016, increasing from 23% in 2011 to 30% in 2016.

When comparing male and female populations, females under 30 years of age constituted a greater percentage of female emergency shelter users compared to males of the same age category. However, younger individuals, both male and female, have consistently represented a greater percentage of the total number of emergency shelter users compared to older individuals.

GENDER, AGE RANGE, AND AVERAGE AGE



MALES	YOUNGEST	AVERAGE	OLDEST
2011	18	41	96
2012	17	41	84
2013	17	49	87
2014	15	40	95
2015	16	40	82
2016	16	40	83



FEMALES	YOUNGEST	AVERAGE	OLDEST
2011	18	36	82
2012	17	36	81
2013	16	35	84
2014	17	35	79
2015	16	36	80
2016	16	35	83

Overall, the youngest age of independent males and females has decreased by two years between 2011 and 2016. Since 2011, the oldest age of independent individuals accessing emergency shelter varied each year, with an overall decrease of 13 years for males and increase of one year for females.

The average age for both independent males and females has remained fairly consistent since 2011, with the exception of the average age for independent males, which increased to 49 years in 2013.

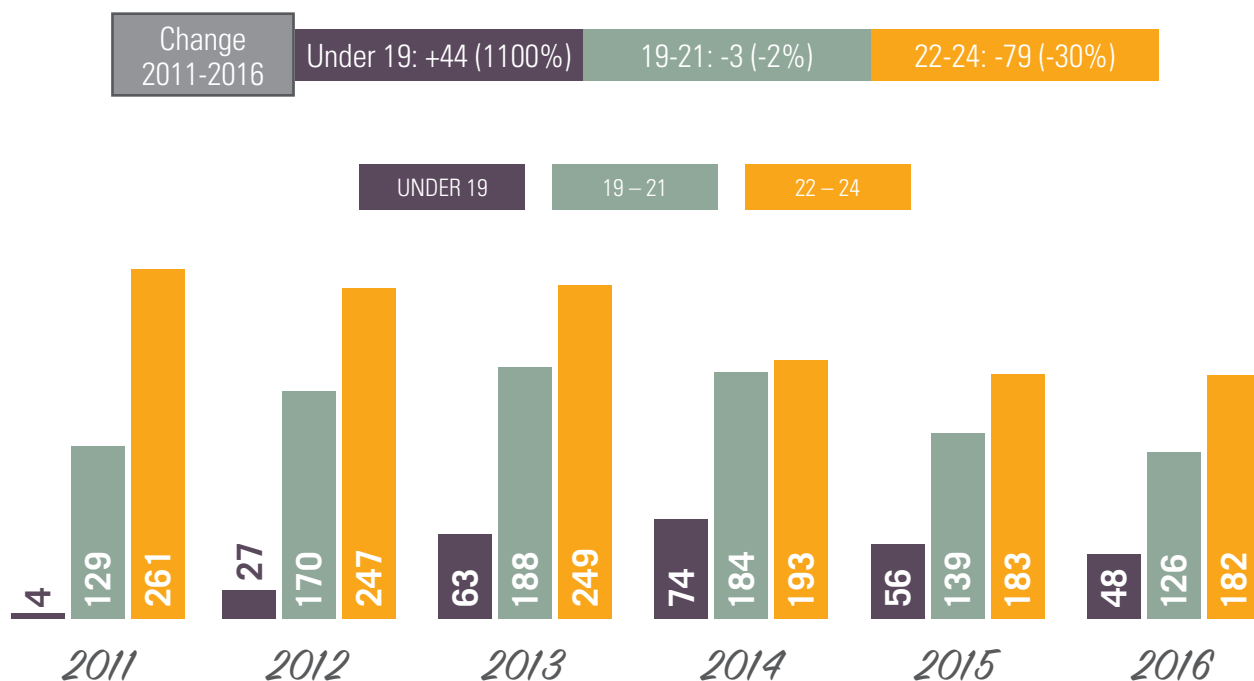
Between 2011 and 2016, the average age of independent males accessing emergency shelter has remained consistently higher than the average age of female shelter users.

EMERGENCY SHELTER USE BY INDIVIDUALS UNDER THE AGE OF 25

Youth accessing emergency shelter require different supports compared to adults accessing emergency shelter. There is also diversity within the category of “youth,” as individuals at varying stages in their development require different interventions. Understanding youth involvement in the emergency shelter system will help ensure the proper supports are made available.

Since 2011, the number of individuals under the age of 25 accessing emergency shelter has decreased from 394 in 2011 to 356 in 2016.

NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT YOUTH, UNDER 25, WHO ACCESSED EMERGENCY SHELTER



The number of independent youth under 19 years of age accessing emergency shelter increased each year between 2011 and 2014, from four individuals in 2011 to 74 individuals in 2014, before decreasing in 2015 to 56 individuals and again in 2016 to 48 individuals.

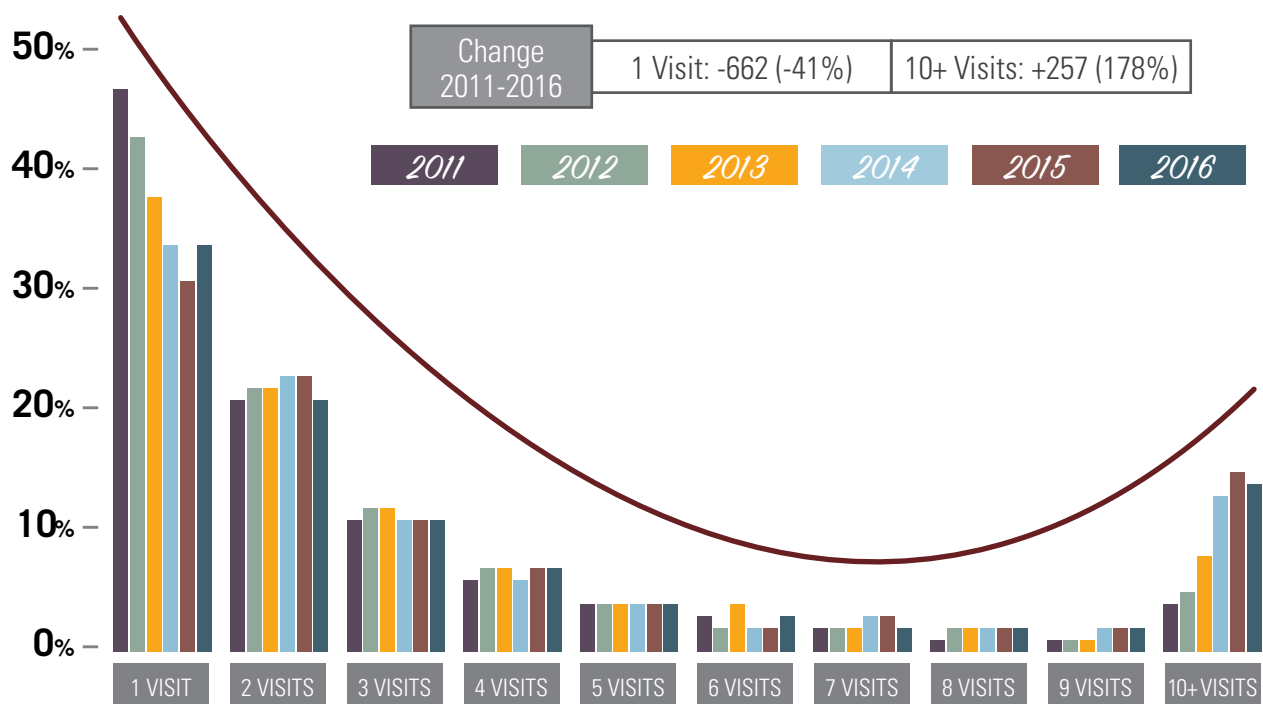
The number of independent youth 19-21 years of age accessing emergency shelter also increased each year between 2011 and 2013, and has decreased each year since 2014.

Between 2011 and 2016, the number of independent youth aged 22-24 years old accessing emergency shelter has decreased by 30% from 261 individuals in 2011 to 182 individuals in 2016.

HOW ARE LONDON'S EMERGENCY SHELTERS BEING USED?

NUMBER OF VISITS⁸

NUMBER OF VISITS TO EMERGENCY SHELTERS



Since 2011, the percentage of unique individuals for whom emergency shelter use was a one-time event has decreased from about half of all visits to one-third of all visits.

Conversely, the number of individuals accessing emergency shelter more than ten times has nearly tripled since 2011, increasing from 4% (144 individuals) in 2011 to 14% (401 individuals) in 2016. Between 2011 and 2016, the overall percentage of individuals who used emergency shelter between two and nine times remained fairly consistent.

The maximum number of emergency shelter visits increased from 31 visits in 2011 to 57 visits in 2016, representing an increase of 84%.

⁸ The number of visits refers to the number of times, regardless of the number of nights stayed, that an individual used an emergency shelter per year. This number includes dependent children and youth.

NUMBER OF EMERGENCY SHELTERS VISITED

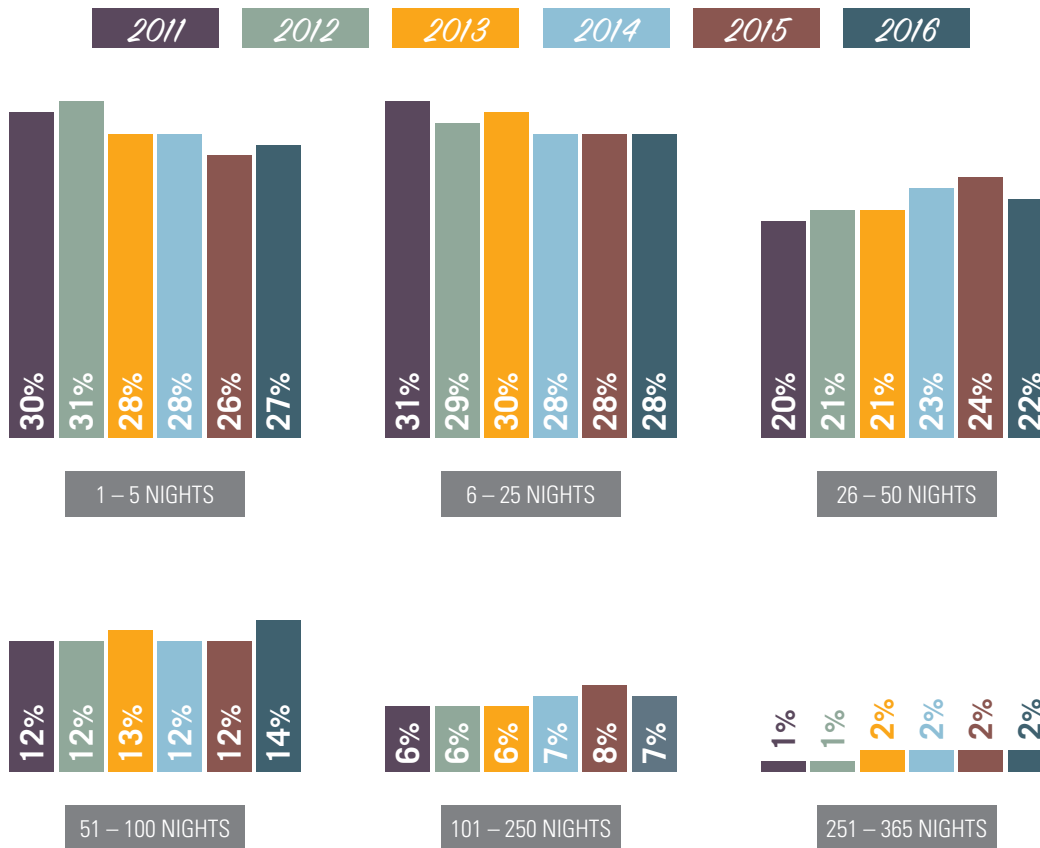


It is possible for an individual to visit more than one emergency shelter in London. Of the individuals who made ten or more visits to emergency shelters between 2011 and 2016, few made visits to only one shelter.⁹ Most individuals who made ten or more visits to emergency shelter visited two or three different shelters. This pattern remained consistent between 2011 and 2016.

⁹Visits to Rotholme Women's and Family Shelter were excluded from this analysis because only families are eligible to stay at this shelter.

NUMBER OF NIGHTS STAYED¹⁰

NUMBER OF NIGHTS STAYED IN EMERGENCY SHELTER



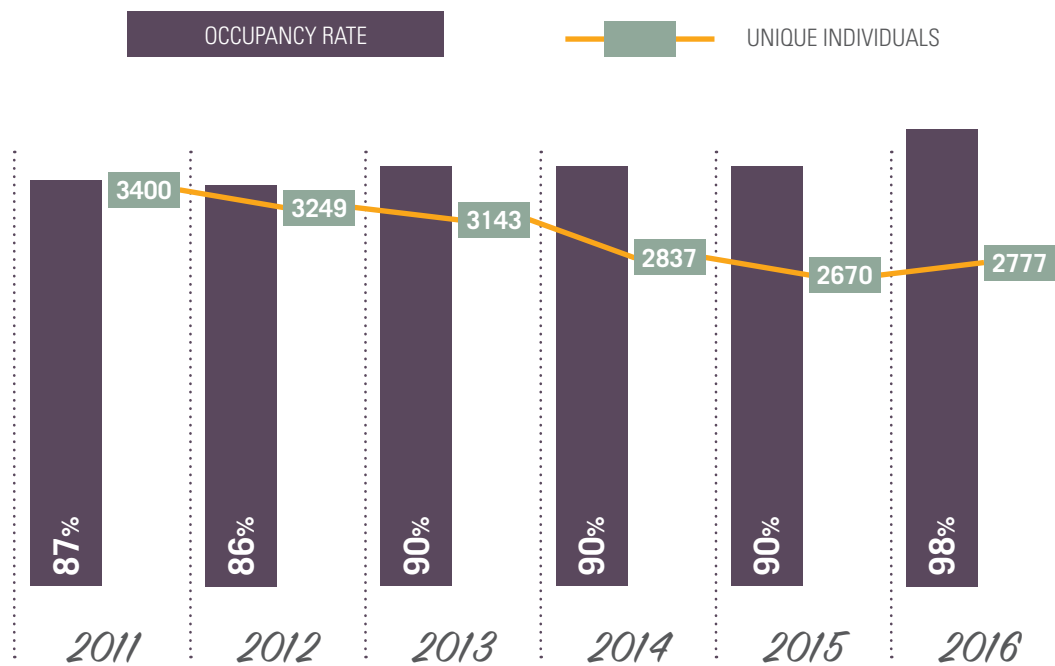
Since 2011, the percentage of unique individuals who stayed in emergency shelter for 25 or fewer nights decreased from 61% in 2011 to 55% in 2016. The percentage of individuals who stayed between 26 and 50 nights remained fairly consistent between 2011 and 2016, while the percentage of individuals staying over 50 nights in emergency shelter increased from 19% in 2011 to 23% in 2016.

¹⁰Number of nights stayed refers to the total number of nights an individual stayed in shelter. This number includes dependent children and youth.

OCCUPANCY RATE

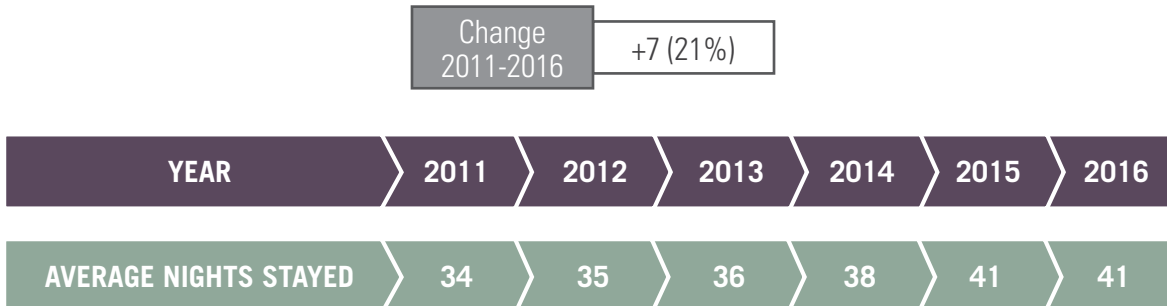
Occupancy rate refers to the ratio of occupied beds compared to the total number of beds available. The occupancy rates below represent the average of the four emergency shelters.

OCCUPANCY RATE VERSUS UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS



While the number of unique individuals accessing emergency shelter has decreased since 2011, the occupancy rate has increased, indicating individuals are staying longer in emergency shelter. The number of unique individuals decreased from 3,400 individuals in 2011 to 2,777 individuals in 2016, and the occupancy rate increased from 87% in 2011 to 98% in 2016.

AVERAGE NIGHTS STAYED



Since 2011, the average number of nights stayed in emergency shelter has increased, from 34 nights in 2011 to 41 nights in 2016, representing an average increase of seven nights in shelter.

NUMBER OF NIGHTS STAYED OVER 365

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
335 TO 364 NIGHTS	4	10	12	11	17	8
365 NIGHTS	3	1	1	4	7	3
OVER 365 NIGHTS	7	7	4	5	2	5
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	14	18	17	20	26	16

The number of individuals who stayed in shelter 11 months or more (over 335 days) almost doubled between 2011 and 2015, increasing from 14 individuals in 2011 to 26 individuals in 2015, before decreasing to 16 individuals in 2016.

The number of individuals staying more than 365 nights decreased from seven individuals in 2011 to five individuals in 2016. These individuals likely registered in more than one emergency shelter on the same night, resulting in them being over counted.

AGE AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF NIGHTS STAYED



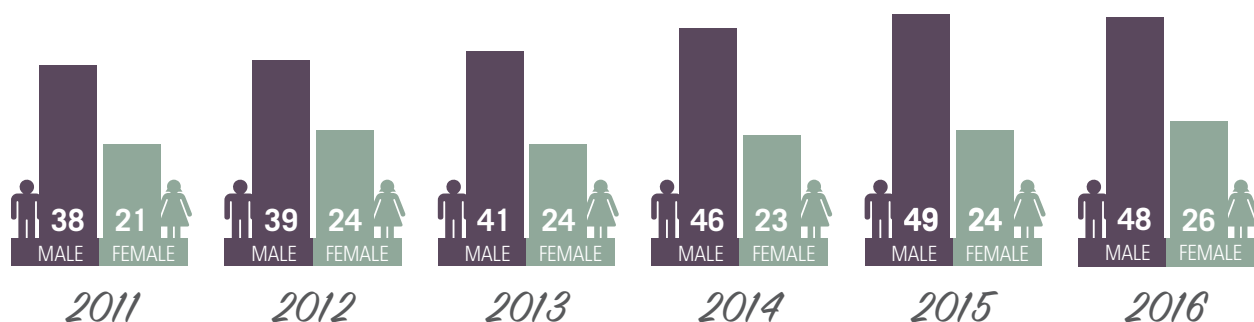
Between 2011 and 2016, almost all age groups experienced an increase in the average number of nights stayed.¹¹ The 30-39 and the 50-59 age categories experienced the greatest increase, with the average number of nights stayed increasing for both age categories by 13 nights.

From 2011 to 2016, the average number of nights stayed for individuals aged 17 or younger increased by three nights. For individuals aged 25-29, the average number of nights stayed increased by ten nights and for individuals aged 60 or older, the average number of nights stayed increased by 12 nights. In comparison, for individuals aged 18-24, the average number of nights stayed decreased by one night.

The average number of nights stayed generally increases with age.

¹¹ Includes dependent children and youth.

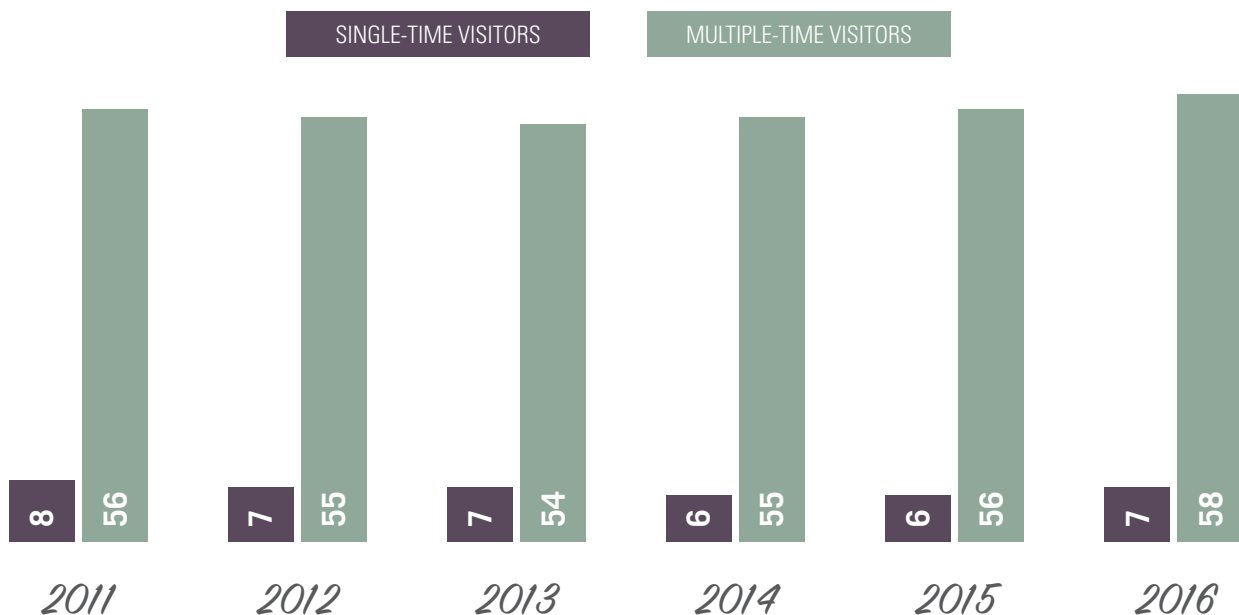
GENDER AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF NIGHTS STAYED



Between 2011 and 2016, the average number of nights stayed increased for both adult males and adult females.

Since 2011, the average number of nights stayed by males increased by ten nights, from 38 nights in 2011 to 48 nights in 2016, while the average number of nights stayed by females increased by five nights, from 21 nights in 2011 to 26 nights in 2016.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF NIGHTS STAYED FOR SINGLE AND MULTIPLE TIME VISITORS



Single-time emergency shelter visitors typically stayed for a shorter period of time, approximately one week, compared to multiple-time emergency shelter visitors, who stayed for a longer period of time, on average, approximately two months.

MOVING TO ACTION

The findings of this report demonstrate the following:

- **The number of emergency shelter visits is increasing.** One-time visits decreased from close to half of all visits to approximately one-third, while the number of 10+ visits has nearly tripled.
- **Individuals are staying longer in emergency shelter.** The percentage of individuals staying 25 or fewer nights has decreased, while the percentage of individuals staying more than 25 nights has increased.
- **The average number of nights stayed is increasing.** The average number of nights individuals stayed in shelter in 2011 was 34 nights, which increased to 41 nights in 2016.
- **The total number of nights individuals are staying in emergency shelter is increasing.** For individuals over 30 years of age, the number of nights stayed in emergency shelter has increased by an average of 12 nights.
- **The number of young people accessing emergency shelter increased.** The number of independent youth under 22 years of age accessing emergency shelter increased from 133 in 2011 to 174 in 2016, peaking in 2014 at 258 youth.
- **Independent youth accessing emergency shelter in London are getting younger.** The youngest age in 2011 was 18 years old, compared to 16 years old in 2016, with the youngest age being 15 years old in 2014.
- **Young adult females, 29 years of age or younger, are disproportionately represented.** Approximately 42% of females accessing emergency shelter were 29 years of age or younger between 2011 and 2016, in comparison to 28% of males in the same age range.
- **Emergency shelter occupancy rates are increasing.** The number of unique individuals accessing emergency shelter decreased from 3,400 individuals in 2011 to 2,777 individuals in 2016, while the occupancy rate increased from 87% in 2011 to 98% in 2016.

Strategies to address, reduce, and prevent homelessness, supported and informed by the data include, but are not limited to:

A Youth Shelter

Young people experiencing homelessness require different supports and services than adults, particularly those that address a youth's stage of development and unique experiences. In London, the number of independent youth under the age of 22 experiencing homelessness increased by 31% between 2011 and 2016.

Through a public request for proposal, Youth Opportunities Unlimited was selected to design, build, and operate a Housing First youth shelter in London. Plans are well under way. A new Housing First program has also been established, with a priority focus on providing young people entering emergency shelter with a rapid exit strategy.

A Homeless Management Information System

From 2011-2016, 93% of individuals visiting emergency shelter more than ten times accessed at least two emergency shelters, moving from one shelter to another without being housed. Further, a number of individuals were identified as staying in shelter more than 365 days, which means they were registered at and billed by more than one shelter on the same night.

A special project is now in place between shelters to identify chronic shelter users and prioritize intake into Housing First programs. In December 2017, a shared Homeless Management Information System will be operational and will allow emergency shelters to share information and access comprehensive data as it relates to an individual's experience with homelessness. This information can be used to identify trends and develop strategies to help individuals find and maintain housing.

Exceptional Circumstances And Extended Stay Practices

The trend of fewer one-time visits to emergency shelter and more 10+ visits coincides with the implementation of the exceptional circumstances and extended stay requests practice in emergency shelters. The practice was intended to encourage individuals to secure housing within 30 days. These practices were effective in identifying particular issues, such as use of emergency shelter when someone has housing, orders to reside at emergency shelters, and out of town residents. This practice has been evaluated and modified, and continues to assist with identifying trends and a shared response.

Strategies To Address Persistent And Chronic Homelessness

In London, emergency shelters provide a bed, basic needs, and some support to individuals and/or families who are experiencing homelessness, and are aimed at meeting immediate, short-term needs. However, given the number of individuals whose stay is not short-term, emergency shelters are not being used for their intended purpose. The increase in occupancy rates in 2016 will be reviewed.

The increase in the number of nights individuals are remaining in shelter suggests a trend towards increased chronic homelessness in London. This segment of the emergency shelter population requires a prioritized and specialized approach to secure and maintain housing stability through an intensive case management and Housing First approach.

Housing First Principles

London's emergency shelter staff use Housing First principles in the services and supports they provide to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. One such principle is diversion, a strategy to help keep individuals in their homes or find alternative housing arrangements to prevent homelessness for individuals seeking shelter. When successfully implemented, individuals and families access emergency shelters only when all other options have been exhausted.

Housing First Programs

A number of Housing First programs operate in London. Housing First programs are aimed at improving the health and housing stability of individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness. Housing First programs offer assistance in securing housing, intensive in-home case management, and ongoing support to individuals and families who have experienced persistent homelessness and are now housed. Housing First programs support individuals and families in their housing stability by assisting with the transition into a new home, neighbourhood, and community.

The Emergency Shelter Collaboration Group

In 2016, emergency shelter operators formed the Emergency Shelter Collaboration Group to provide a more seamless approach to assisting individuals who are currently engaged in chronic use of the emergency shelter system in London.

The Emergency Shelter Collaboration Group manages a "by-name list" of individuals who have experienced chronic homelessness and persistent shelter use. Emergency shelter staff meet with the individual daily, while they are in emergency shelter, to work towards identified goals. Frequent case conferences are held to develop solutions.

Referrals to any Housing First programs are made through the Emergency Shelter Collaboration Group. This process assists with ensuring that referrals to Housing First programs are targeted to individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and achieving a reduction in chronic shelter use.

CONCLUSION

The data in London's Emergency Shelters Progress Report: 2011-2016 presents valuable information on how many individuals have been accessing emergency shelters, the demographics of emergency shelter users, and how individuals have been using emergency shelters. This report also builds on the two previous Emergency Shelters Progress Reports to demonstrate the continuation of trends observed in emergency shelter use.

Results from this report will assist shelter operators to continue to track and compare emergency shelter use trends over time and use this data for continued decision-making and ongoing impact.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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