ABOUT 20,000 HOMES

20,000 Homes is “a national change movement focused on ending chronic homelessness in 20 communities and housing 20,000 of Canada’s most vulnerable homeless people by July 1, 2020.”¹ The 20,000 Homes Campaign is led by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) and encourages local communities to sign on under a set of guiding principles and core elements as part of a commitment to ending homelessness. There are currently 35 participating campaign communities, including Guelph-Wellington.

The Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes campaign is led in partnership by the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination and the County of Wellington. The campaign co-chairs are Lori Richer, Housing Stability Manager, County of Wellington Social Services, and Randalin Ellery, Coordinator, Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Randalin Ellery is the Coordinator of the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination. She has held the position since 2009, when the PTF was established. Randalin also serves as the Co-Chair of Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes, a local initiative focused on ending homelessness. She holds a Master's degree in Sociology and International Development from the University of Guelph.

The citation for this report is:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Working in collaboration, organizations and leaders in Guelph-Wellington have come together with a shared commitment to ending homelessness in our community. The progress achieved in this report would not be possible without the leadership, guidance and commitment that so many in our community have shown.

With special thanks, the campaign acknowledges members of the following:

- Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Leadership Committee
- Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Operations Committee
- Complex Clients Working Group

Special acknowledgement is provided to the following individuals for their ongoing support and guidance:

- Tim Richter, President & CEO, Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness
- Marie Morrison, Director, 20,000 Homes Campaign, Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness
- Andi Broffman, Deputy Director, Community Solutions
- Hannah Kim, Improvement Advisor, Community Solutions

¹ 20,000 Homes (2017). 20,000 Homes. Available http://www.20khomes.ca/
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 20,000 Homes Campaign is “a national change movement focused on ending chronic homelessness in 20 communities and housing 20,000 of Canada’s most vulnerable homeless people by July 1, 2020.” Co-led by the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination and the County of Wellington, the Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Campaign (Guelph-Wellington 20K) is one of 35 participating communities from across the country.

In 2016, Guelph-Wellington 20K launched with a Registry Week from April 25th to April 29th. During this week, trained volunteers administered a health and housing survey with individuals experiencing homelessness in Guelph-Wellington. A total of 295 individuals were found to be experiencing homelessness over a three-day period during Registry Week. A report with findings was released in July 2016.3

Following Registry Week, Guelph-Wellington 20K launched important tools aimed at improving the local homeless-serving system and housing placements, including a By-Name List (BNL) and a Coordinated Entry System (CES). These tools have supported a “robust set of data points that support coordinated access and prioritization at a household level and an understanding of homeless inflow and outflow at a system level.”4

This report provides an overview of this data, demonstrating progress toward ending homelessness 2016/17, as well as a snapshot of the current experiences and demographics of the homeless population.

Overall, the number of individuals actively experiencing homelessness on the BNL has decreased 38% from Registry Week in April 2016, from 207 individuals to 129. A high percentage (57%) of those individuals are considered high-acuity (high depth of need) and the data demonstrates that high-acuity individuals that are housed, struggle to maintain housing stability. While there have been 72 housing placements since February 2017 (when the CES was introduced), not all have been maintained. On average, single adults without children and unaccompanied youth maintained a housing placement for an average of four months over a 9-month period.

The report demonstrates that unaccompanied youth (16 - 24 years old) are of particular concern. High-acuity unaccompanied youth currently make up 57% of the BNL (compared to 26% in February 2017 when the CES was introduced). Of the 72 housing placements that took place from February 2017 - October 2017, unaccompanied youth accounted for 28 of them. Of those 28 housing placements, only 46% are currently being maintained.

While seeing progress in terms of decreasing numbers is important, so is understanding the changing experiences and demographics of those that are currently actively homeless on the BNL. In general, the acuity and chronicity levels have remained consistent since Registry Week. However, analysis demonstrates that the percentage of those experiencing physical health issues and substance use issues are on the rise. As well, the percent of unaccompanied youth experiencing episodic homelessness has increased from 25% in April 2016 to 44% in October 2017.

Finally, the report provides an overview of the advocacy and communication efforts that have taken place in 2016/17 that have supported the goal of ending homelessness. This includes advocating to government, in particular the Federal Government, as well as engaging individuals with lived experience of homelessness and providing timely and public reports on the progress of the campaign.

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2 20,000 Homes (2017). 20,000 Homes. Available http://www.20khomes.ca/
BACKGROUND & KEY CONCEPTS

Background

The Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination and the County of Wellington Social Services share a vision that everyone in Guelph-Wellington “can find and maintain an appropriate, safe, and affordable place to call home.”5 Encouraged by action taken in other communities to end homelessness, the Poverty Task Force (PTF) and the County made a strategic decision to co-lead a local movement in support of the 20,000 Homes Campaign. The 20,000 Homes Campaign is a “national change movement focused on ending chronic homelessness in 20 communities and housing 20,000 of Canada’s most vulnerable homeless people by July 1, 2020.”6

To gain an in-depth understanding of the needs and experiences of the homeless population, local 20,000 Homes campaigns typically begin with a Registry Week. During Registry Week, trained volunteers administer a short health and housing survey with community members identified as experiencing homelessness. The survey collects person-specific information to understand the level of vulnerability and acuity (or depth of need). The data collected helps communities to prioritize and house the most vulnerable, as well as to track progress toward ending homelessness. The Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Campaign conducted its Registry Week from April 25th to April 29th, 2016.

Since Registry Week, Guelph-Wellington 20K Homes has made significant progress to strengthen the homeless-serving system and to house the most vulnerable. This annual report is organized in three distinct sections:

- **Section 1: Progress Report: Homelessness & High-acuity**
  - This section of the report focuses on the experiences of high-acuity individuals experiencing homelessness in Guelph-Wellington. This includes their movement into and out of homelessness, including housing placements. While most this section focuses on single adults without children and unaccompanied youth, there are some insights into families experiencing homelessness.

- **Section 2: Snapshot of Homelessness**
  - This section provides a snapshot of the experiences of individuals on the BNL who are actively homeless (regardless of acuity level). The purpose of this section is to see if the experiences and demographics of the homeless population in our community have changed over time.

- **Section 3: Advocacy & Communication**
  - This section of the report provides an overview of local advocacy and communication efforts to build public and political support for ending homelessness.7

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Guelph-Wellington By-Name List

A By-Name List is defined by the 20,000 Homes national campaign as a “real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness in your community.” While it is recognized that a quality-BNL can meet this definition, Guelph-Wellington is in the early stages and it is helpful to consider who exactly is captured by our community’s BNL. The following diagram demonstrates the nesting relationship between different enumeration methods and several elements connected to a BNL (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Homelessness enumeration diagram

The following is an explanation of each component:

a. All homelessness - this includes everyone experiencing homelessness in a community at any given time. It is impossible to know this number due to its fluidity (i.e. people constantly moving in and out of homelessness) and the fact that some intentionally avoid being counted. The number of “all homelessness” is, in fact, a number we can never truly know.

b. Known homelessness - this includes the number of individuals experiencing homelessness that were identified during a count that lasted for a specific period. For example, a Point-in-Time (PiT) Count typically takes place over 24 hours and a Period Prevalence Count can take place over a week or more. These types of counts ask individuals experiencing homelessness to share anonymous information and can include individuals that are not talked to, but rather are simply observed.
   - In 2016, a combined Registry Week/PiT Count identified 295 individuals experiencing homelessness in Guelph-Wellington over a three-day period.

c. Known homelessness - this second level of known homelessness includes individuals that are experiencing homelessness and have consented to be added to the BNL. This typically occurs as

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part of a Coordinated Entry System (CES) and involves the completion of a Common Assessment Tool (CAT).

- Of the 295 individuals identified during Registry Week in April 2016, 207 consented to be added to the BNL. As of October 2017, there were 129 individuals on the BNL.

d. Active & Eligible (interested in service) - not all individuals that have consented to the be added to the BNL are in a place where they are actively experiencing homelessness. Some individuals may become inactive (even temporarily) while participating in a treatment program, serving a jail sentence, etc. Level d includes those that are active, eligible and interested in the housing support resources offered through your communities CES. This list of individuals is sometimes referred to as the Coordinated Entry list.

e. Match ready for housing supports - this is a subset of the Coordinated Entry list. It includes those with the highest priority for matching to an available housing resource.

- Locally, we have determined that individuals that score in the high-acuity range of the CAT should be prioritized. In the event of a matching score, chronic and episodic homelessness is being considered.

Reference to the BNL in this report includes those that have consented to be added to the list by completing the CAT as part of the CES. While Guelph-Wellington 20K Homes is working toward improving the quality of its BNL, the number of people on the BNL should not be considered as the number of people experiencing homelessness in our community. A more accurate reference for this would be the 2016 Registry Week report, which identified 295 individuals as experiencing homelessness over a three-day period. Due to limitations involved with PIT Counts, this should be considered the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness.


**Common Assessment Tool (CAT)**

To be added to the BNL, an individual must complete the Common Assessment Tool (CAT). The CAT uses a standardized scoring system to assist communities in determining the appropriate level of intervention for the homeless family or individual.\(^\text{10}\) In advance of Registry Week in April 2016, a decision was made to use the Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) as the CAT in Guelph-Wellington. There are currently three versions of this tool being used as part of the CES in Guelph-Wellington:

- TAY-VI-SPDAT (Transition Age Youth) - administered with unaccompanied youth aged 16 - 24 years
- VI-SPDAT - administered with single adults (25 years +) without children
- F-VI-SPDAT - administered with parents/guardians with children in their care under the age of 18

**Coordinated Entry System (CES)**

A Coordinated Entry System (CES) is a shared and standardized method for connecting people experiencing homelessness to the resources available. In February 2017, the Guelph-Wellington CES was introduced.

Working with 8 different Door Agencies, families and individuals are assessed using the CAT and are then added to the BNL. The BNL then informs referrals to appropriate housing supports and services.

Complex Clients Working Group (CCWG)

The Complex Clients Working Group (CCWG) includes stakeholders who have a vested interest supporting individuals experiencing homeless with complex needs in a plan towards stabilization. At monthly meetings, the CCWG reviews the BNL, provides updates on individual statuses, and identifies gaps and barriers to housing the most vulnerable.

SECTION 1: PROGRESS REPORT - HOMELESSNESS & HIGH-ACUITY

Progress Report: Homelessness & High-acuity

In preparation for Registry Week in April 2016, community leaders and stakeholders were pulled together to form the Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Leadership Committee. In addition to raising awareness and leveraging resources, members of the Leadership Committee were tasked with setting community-level goals to contribute to national efforts to house the most vulnerable. Based on lengthy discussions and analysis of the state of homelessness in Guelph-Wellington, the Leadership Committee determined that efforts to house the most vulnerable should focus on individuals and families that score in the high-acuity range on the CAT.

To monitor these efforts, the Guelph-Wellington 20K Homes has closely tracked the experiences of high-acuity individuals on the BNL. This started primarily with single adults without children and unaccompanied youth in February 2017 when the CES was introduced, and recently expanded to families in September 2017.

The following section provides information and analysis based on monitoring single adults without children and unaccompanied youth that have completed the CAT and scored in the high-acuity range.

As of October 2017, there were a total of 70 high-acuity individuals that were actively experiencing homelessness (this includes those that are temporarily housed). This number has fluctuated over time, ranging from a low of 49 individuals (June 2017) to a high of 74 individuals (September 2017) (Figure 2).
Figure 2: # of high-acuity individuals experiencing homelessness on the BNL - by category

An important observation of this data is the *increase* in the number of high-acuity unaccompanied youth on the BNL. In February 2017, there were 17 unaccompanied youth and by October 2017 there were 40. Over the same period, the number of single adults without children *decreased* from 49 to 30.

High-acuity unaccompanied youth as a percentage of the overall BNL has increased significantly over time. In February 2017, youth accounted for 26% of the BNL and this increased to 57% by October 2017 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: % of high-acuity individuals experiencing homelessness on the BNL - by category (2017)

To understand these trends better, it is important to consider the flow *into* homelessness and the flow *out* of homelessness. The flow into homelessness (i.e. inflow) includes:
• **Newly identified individuals:** These are individuals that were not previously on the BNL and have completed the CAT for the first time. This includes individuals who are new to homelessness, but also those that have previous experiences of homelessness but had not completed the CAT.

• **Individuals that have returned to homelessness from housing:** These are individuals that were on the BNL, were successfully housed, and then returned to homelessness.

• **Individuals that have returned to homelessness from being inactive:** These are individuals that were on the BNL, became inactive, and then returned to homelessness. An individual may become inactive because (1) they moved to another community for 90 days or more, (2) they were completing a stay in a system (e.g. treatment program, jail sentence) for 90 days or more, or (3) their whereabouts became unknown for 90 days or more.

Since the CES began in February 2017, it was expected that the inflow would be high for the first few months, as agencies worked to get clients on the BNL that did not make it on during Registry Week or who had become homeless since that time. Analysis of the inflow demonstrates that while this did occur, numbers dipped in June 2017, but have since increased. There was a significant spike in September and numbers continue to fluctuate (Figure 4).

![Figure 4: # of "inflow" of high-acuity actively homeless individuals on the BNL (2017)](image)

There are two important observations based on Figure 4. First, there were no returns (from inactive or from housing) that were reported in July and August. Second, there was a significant number of returns from housing (20) reported in September. This may suggest that returns in September include those that occurred in June and July, but were not reported. It could also suggest that loss of housing was significant in September (perhaps related to the return of post-secondary students). Moving forward, annual data collection may help to understand these trends further.

Overall, newly identified individuals account for 57% of inflow from February to October 2017, while those that returned from housing account for 33%, and those that returned from systems account for 10%

Considered another way, based on information from February to October 2017, an average of 7 newly identified individuals joined the BNL each month, while an average of 4 returned from housing, and an average of 1 returned from a system.

Further analysis demonstrates that, overall, unaccompanied youth account for just over half (54%) of inflow. A closer look at this shows that while unaccompanied youth make up just over half of those returning from
housing (51%), they make up a larger portion of newly identified individuals (61%), but far less of those that have returned from an inactive status (27%) (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single adult's w/o children</th>
<th>Unaccompanied Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newly identified</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned from housing</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned from inactive</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: % of overall inflow by unaccompanied youth and single adults without children*

The flow out of homelessness is also important to consider. ‘Outflow’ includes:

- Individuals that have been housed (i.e. housing placements): These are individuals that were actively homeless on the BNL and secured a housing placement.
- Individuals that have moved to inactive: These are individuals that were actively homeless on the BNL and became inactive. An individual may become inactive because (1) they moved to another community for 90 days or more, (2) they were completing a stay in a system (e.g. treatment program, jail sentence) for 90 days or more, or (3) their whereabouts became unknown for 90 days or more.

Over time, outflow numbers have ebbed and flowed rather significantly (Figure 5). However, similar trends among outflow can be observed when compared to inflow. In particular, lower numbers of outflow are observed during the summer months, with a significant spike in September 2017. Again, this may mean that September includes outflow numbers that were not reported during the previous months. Moving forward, annualized data will help us determine if this is a trend.

![Figure 5: # of outflow of high-acuity actively homeless individuals on the BNL (2017)](image)

Overall, housing placements account for 63% of outflow from February to October 2017, while individuals that became inactive account for 37%. Considered another way, based on information from February to October, an average of 8 housing placements took place per month, and an average of 5 individuals became inactive.
Further analysis demonstrates that, overall, single adults without children account for 63% of overall outflow. A closer look at this shows that single adults account for 60% of overall housing placements and 68% of individuals that have become inactive, during the period of February to October 2017 (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single adult’s w/o children</th>
<th>Unaccompanied Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing placements</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved to inactive</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: % of overall outflow by unaccompanied youth and single adults without children*

**High-acuity Housing Placements**

In total, there have been 117 housing placements among high-acuity individuals experiencing homelessness on the BNL since Registry Week in April 2016. Of those housing placements, 45 (38%) occurred from April 2016 to January 2017. The remaining 72 (62%) were housed during the 9-month period from February 2017 (when the CES was launched) to October 2017.

It’s important to note that the number of housing placements does not represent the number of individuals housed. Rather, an individual can be housed more than once and each housing placement is counted. For example, if an individual was housed and then lost their housing and was re-housed, they would account for two housing placements.

As a result of the CES, there is monthly data available on housing placements from February 2017 to October 2017. Figure 6 provides a monthly overview of these housing placements, showing the difference between single adults without children and unaccompanied youth. Overall, there have been 44 high-acuity adult housing placements and 28 high-acuity youth housing placements from February to October 2017, for a total of 72 housing placements in a 9-month period (Figure 6).

*Figure 6 - # of monthly housing placements for high-acuity actively homeless individuals on the BNL by category (2017)*
Viewed another way, Figure 7 demonstrates the percentage of monthly housing placements for high-acuity individuals on the BNL from February to October 2017. Overall, unaccompanied youth account for 39% of the housing placements, and single adults without children account for the remaining 61%.

A housing placement does not guarantee an end to homelessness for many individuals. Maintaining housing stability can be a significant challenge for many. Analysis of housing placement data for high-acuity individuals from the BNL demonstrates this, particularly for unaccompanied youth. Of the 28 unaccompanied youth housing placements that took place from February 2017 - October 2017, only 13 (46%) are currently being maintained. Of the 44 single adult housing placements, 28 (64%) are currently being maintained.

Looking at the length of housing placements provides further insights into the challenges of maintaining housing stability. Figure 8 provides an overview of the percentage of housing placements that were maintained for 1-3 months, 3-5 months, and 6 months or more. It is important to note that this analysis includes housing placements that are currently being maintained. For example, it includes housing placements that occurred two months ago and are still being maintained, as well as placements that lasted two months and the individual is currently homeless.
Based on housing placements from February to October 2017, the average length of time for a housing placement is similar for high-acuity single adults without children (4.4 months) and unaccompanied youth (4 months).

**Family Homelessness**

As part of the CES, data on high-acuity family homelessness has only recently begun to be tracked to the same level as single adults without children and unaccompanied youth. As a result, limited information is available for analysis. The following provides an overview of the number of high-acuity families that account for inflow, outflow, and active homelessness (Figure 9).
SECTION 2: SNAPSHOT OF HOMELESSNESS IN GUELPH-WELLINGTON

Overall, the number of individuals actively experiencing homelessness on the BNL since Registry Week (April 2016) has decreased 38%. While seeing progress in terms of decreasing numbers is important, so is understanding the changing experiences and demographics of those that are currently on the BNL. The following information provides insights into this at 6-month intervals.

The number of individuals experiencing homelessness on the BNL (Table 3) includes individuals who are:

- Actively homeless (including those that are temporarily housed, e.g. transitional housing)
- Have completed the CAT as part of the CES and have consented to be added to the list
- Low, mid- and high-acuity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3: Number of individuals experiencing homelessness on the BNL*

Based on Registry Week data collected in April 2016, 64% of individuals on the BNL were adults without children, 25% were unaccompanied youth, and 11% were adult and children family members. The percentage of individuals experiencing homelessness on the BNL based on these categories shows that this has changed over time (Figure 10). While the percentage of single adults without children is now 47%, the number of unaccompanied youth is up to 39% of the BNL. The number of adults and children in families has remained relatively consistent.

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11 Initially, there was a significant decrease during the six-month period of April 2016 to October 2016. While some of this can be contributed to housing placements, it should also be noted that during this time, the BNL was only capturing flow out of homelessness. In February 2017, the CES was introduced and flow into homelessness (as well as outflow) started to be tracked. For this reason, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness on the BNL is more accurate in April 2017 (128) and October 2017 (129).
The level of acuity for homeless individuals on the BNL has experienced very little change (Figure 11). In fact, the acuity levels of individuals on the BNL is currently the same as it was in April 2016 after Registry Week. The majority (57%) of actively homeless individuals on the BNL are high-acuity, while 35% are mid-acuity, and a small portion are low-acuity (8%).

The CAT asks participants to identify as ‘male,’ ‘female,’ or ‘other.’ While there were some shifts over time, in April 2016, the percentage of males on the BNL was 63%, females were 35%, and those identifying as ‘other’ accounted for 2%. As of October 2017, the BNL included 65% males, 32% females, and 3% other.

Further analysis of gender does show some differences between age groups. Among single adults without children, the percentage of male individuals actively experiencing homelessness on the BNL is consistently
higher than the percentage of females. However, among unaccompanied youth, the percentages fluctuate over time (Figure 12). For example, following Registry Week (April 2016), the percentage of male unaccompanied youth was lower (44%) than the percentage of females (52%). Yet current data shows this has changed, with males now accounting for a higher percentage (55%) compared to females (39%). It is also worth noting that the percentage of individuals that identified as an ‘other’ gender is consistently higher among youth than it is among single adults without children.

Figure 12: % of unaccompanied youth that are actively experiencing homelessness by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>April 2016</th>
<th>October 2016</th>
<th>April 2017</th>
<th>October 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage of individuals that are actively homeless on the BNL and identify as Indigenous or having Indigenous ancestry has remained rather stable over time (Table 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>April 2016</th>
<th>October 2016</th>
<th>April 2017</th>
<th>October 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: % of actively homeless individuals on the BNL that are Indigenous or have Indigenous ancestry

The percentage of actively homeless individuals on the BNL that are chronically homeless (i.e. have experienced homelessness for 6 cumulative months or more in the past year) has remained consistent from April 2016 to October 2017 (Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>April 2016</th>
<th>October 2016</th>
<th>April 2017</th>
<th>October 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: % of actively homeless individuals on the BNL that are chronically homeless

It should be noted that chronicity, as reported here, only includes those that identified as chronically homeless at the time they completed the CAT. Their experiences since completing the CAT does not change this number. In other words, if an individual completed the CAT in January 2016 and reported that it had been 5 months since they were last housed, and they’ve been homeless for 10 months after the CAT completion (bringing their total months since housed to 15 months), they would not be captured in Table 2.
The percentage of actively homeless individuals on the BNL that are episodically homeless (i.e. have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year) has remained consistent from April 2016 to October 2017 (Table 6).

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6: Percentage of actively homeless on the BNL that are episodically homeless*

Like chronicity, the percentage of individuals reported as episodically homeless is based on information provided by individuals at the time they completed the CAT. Individuals' experiences with episodic homelessness after the completion of the CAT are not captured.

The percentage of individuals experiencing episodic homelessness demonstrates some variability in experiences over time, as presented in Figure 13. In particular, the experiences of unaccompanied youth show a 25% increase in those reporting episodic homelessness from April 2016 to October 2017.

The percentage of individuals that are actively homeless on the BNL are asked several questions about their health as part of the CAT. The results in Table 7 only include responses from adults without children and unaccompanied youth since the information cannot be extracted from family data.

To determine if an individual has physical health issues, participants must respond positively to one or more questions about their physical health, including questions about chronic health issues, physical disabilities, and pregnancy. The percentage of individuals reporting physical health issues (86%) is high, relative to those reporting mental health and substance use issues. However, the increase in those reporting substance use issues (29% increase) from April 2016 (41%) to October 2017 (53%) is most significant.

Tri-morbidity, for the purposes of this reporting, is determined by the presence of physical health, mental health, and substance use issues. The percentage of individuals that qualify as tri-morbid has increased from April 2016 (26%) to October 2017 (32%).
SECTION 3: ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to improving our community’s homeless programs, housing placements, and the system as a whole, the 20,000 Homes national campaign is part of non-partisan advocacy and communication efforts to build public and political support for ending homelessness. The following provides a brief overview of how our community has contributed to this work.

Advocating to Government

The Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Campaign has worked hard to engage all levels of government in the work we are doing. Elected officials are represented on the Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Leadership Committee, including Guelph MP Lloyd Longfield, Minister Liz Sandals (Guelph MPP), City of Guelph Mayor Cam Guthrie, and County of Wellington Councillor George Bridge. Since Registry Week, the local campaign has made a focused effort to advocate at the federal level while it develops the National Housing Strategy.

Local Engagement with Member of Parliament (Guelph)

Staff supporting the Guelph-Wellington 20K Homes have been meeting regularly with MP Lloyd Longfield to bring awareness to local community needs related to affordable housing and homelessness. MP Longfield has responded by including affordable housing as a priority in a triple-bottom line approach that guides his work. To help inform his work, MP Longfield has pulled together a group of key housing and homelessness stakeholders (many of whom are represented at the 20K Leadership Committee) and has been meeting regularly with them.

Housing on the Hill (2016)

Hosted by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, ‘Housing on the Hill’ provides an opportunity to advocate to federal decision makers on housing related issues. In 2016, staff supporting the Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Campaign joined fellow housing leaders from across the country in Ottawa to hear from political leaders, visit with Members of Parliament, and network with politicians, all in an effort to shape the National Housing Strategy.

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Government Submissions

As part of the Government of Canada’s consultation process on the National Housing Strategy, an official submission was provided by the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination. This submission included a clear message - a National Housing Strategy cannot just deal with housing, but must make a commitment to ending homelessness. The full submission is available here: http://www.gwpoverty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Official-Submission-National-Housing-Strategy-copy.pdf

The PTF also provided a submission to the Government of Canada’s Advisory Committee on Homelessness to inform the redesign of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). This submission is available here: http://www.gwpoverty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Official-Submission-Homelessness-Partnering-Strategy.pdf

Engaging Individuals with Lived Experience

In all its engagement and communication efforts, the Guelph-Wellington 20K Homes makes concentrated efforts to leverage the voices of those with lived experience of homelessness.

Advance Your Voice

Advance Your Voice (AYV) was a free five-week public speaking and community advocacy training for six people from Guelph and Wellington who have experienced homelessness. The program provided participants with the skills to share their story publicly and give the realities and consequences of homelessness a louder and broader voice in our community. AYV participants have had the opportunity to share their stories at important community events, including the Registry Week Community Debrief and at a local Push for Change event (http://www.thepushforchange.com/).

Consulting Individuals with Lived Experience

The Poverty Task Force has provided several submissions about housing and homelessness to different levels of government and research bodies (e.g. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness). In an effort to ensure the perspectives shared are informed by and resonate with those experiencing homelessness, the PTF regularly hosts community conversations where they are accessing services (e.g. Wyndham House Youth Resource Centre, Drop In Centre).

General Reporting

The Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Campaign has brought considerable attention to the issue of homelessness in our community. To keep the movement honest, accurate and continuously improving, the campaign provides timely and public reporting on the progress. The following reports are available online:

CONCLUSION

Our community has made significant progress toward ending homelessness in Guelph-Wellington. The number of individuals actively experiencing homelessness on the BNL has decreased 38% from April 2016 to October 2017, and, during this same period, there have been 117 housing placements for the most vulnerable members of our community.

As the result of the introduction of the CES in February 2017, including the BNL, our community now has real-time actionable data that supports triage to services, system performance evaluation and advocacy. This data provides evidence that our CES is working. More housing placements took place during the 9-month period after the launch of the CES (72) than during the same period following Registry Week (45). This is particularly significant given the fact that additional resources were provided following Registry Week (an additional adult Housing First worker and a Youth Housing First Worker), while no new comparable resources were provided after the introduction of the CES.

Despite the progress our community has made, there remains considerable work to be done. In particular, data suggests that we must do more to help individuals maintain housing stability after they have been housed. While the period of time under review is short (9 months), the average length of a housing placement remains considerably low (4 months). This will be an important aspect to monitor moving forward.

Additionally, the data demonstrates concerning trends among high-acuity unaccompanied youth. They currently outnumber single adults without children on the BNL (40 youth compared to 30 adults), make up a smaller percentage (39%) of overall housing placements, and struggle to maintain housing stability once placed (54% of youth housing placements have been lost). Finally, trends among unaccompanied youth that are currently experiencing homelessness are troubling. The data shows increases among unaccompanied youth in terms of episodic homelessness, physical health issues, mental health issues, and substance use issues.

The Guelph-Wellington 20K campaign has laid the foundation for our community to track progress toward ending homelessness. It is with this information that we can set targets, improve local systems, and take action.
WORKS CITED


