



OCTOBER 2016

London's
**EMERGENCY
SHELTERS**

PROGRESS REPORT: 2011 – 2015

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

London's Emergency Shelters Progress Report: 2011 – 2015

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

London's Emergency Shelters Progress Report: 2011-2015 explores the use of London's emergency shelters between 2011 and 2015. The analysis of billing data, from 2011 to 2015, provided an opportunity to learn about trends in emergency shelter use in London. The results will 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 emergency shelter beds funded by the City of London between 2011 and 2015. 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.

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 into a database 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 2015 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:

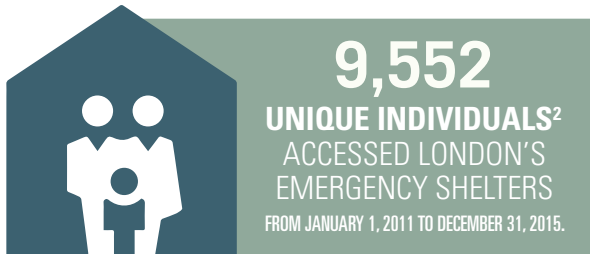
Data Quality. Data recording inconsistencies, such as inconsistent spelling of an individual's name, different birth dates recorded for the same individual, and inconsistent formatting of how dates were recorded were found in the original data set. Data omissions, such as a missing health card number, 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 where possible.

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.

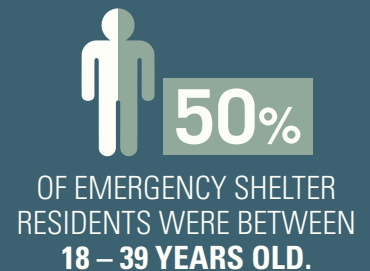
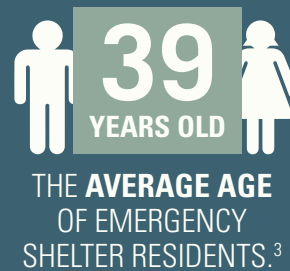
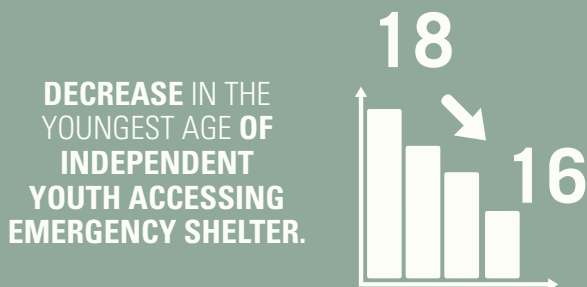
Data Source. The source of the invoices used to create the data set for the report only included emergency shelters in London and did not include VAW emergency shelters. Between 2014 and 2015, Women's Community House served 715 unique individuals, representing 513 women and 202 children.¹ Some women 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. (2015). 2014/15 Annual Report. Retrieved from <http://shelterlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2014-5-WCH-Annual-Report-WEB.pdf>

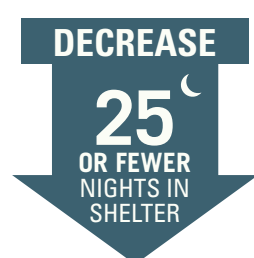
A Snapshot OF THE DATA



21% DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF **UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS** ACCESSING EMERGENCY SHELTER, FROM **3,400** IN 2011 TO **2,670** IN 2015.



77% OF EMERGENCY SHELTER RESIDENTS **WERE MALE** AND **23%** **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 2015.

² Includes dependent children and youth.

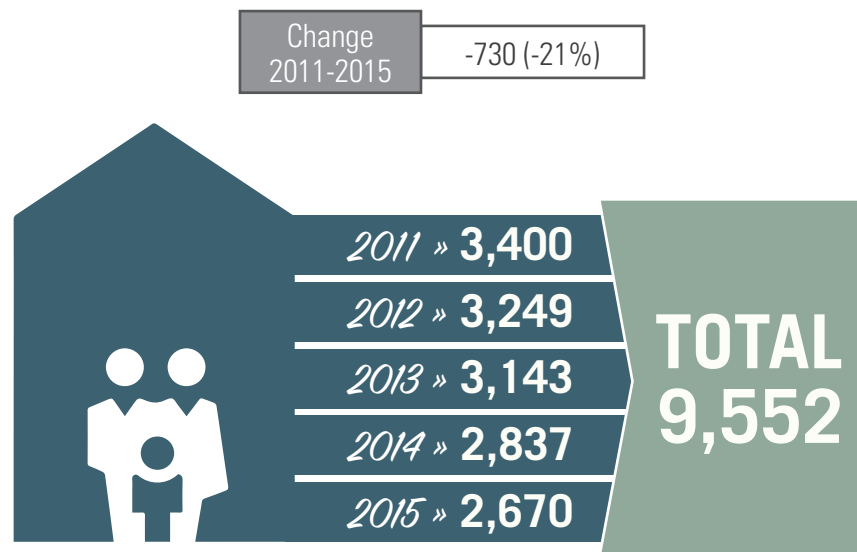
³ Excludes dependent children and youth.

⁴ Where gender was reported.

WHO IS USING LONDON'S EMERGENCY SHELTERS?

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ACCESSED EMERGENCY SHELTERS

From January 1st, 2011 to December 31st, 2015, 9,552 unique individuals accessed London's emergency shelters. This number includes both adults and dependent children and youth.⁵



Between 2011 and 2015, the number of unique individuals accessing emergency shelter decreased each year. There were 730 fewer individuals accessing emergency shelter in London in 2015 (2,670 individuals) than in 2011 (3,400 individuals), representing a decrease of 21%.

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.

⁵9,552 represents the total number of unique individuals who accessed emergency shelter over a five-year period from 2011-2015. 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), and 2015 (2,670 individuals) is higher than the five-year total of 9,552.

PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN ACCESSING EMERGENCY SHELTERS

Between 2011 and 2015, 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. One-tenth of individuals who accessed emergency shelter were dependent children and youth.



67%
WERE ADULT MALES



21%
WERE ADULT FEMALES



10%
WERE DEPENDENT CHILDREN AND YOUTH

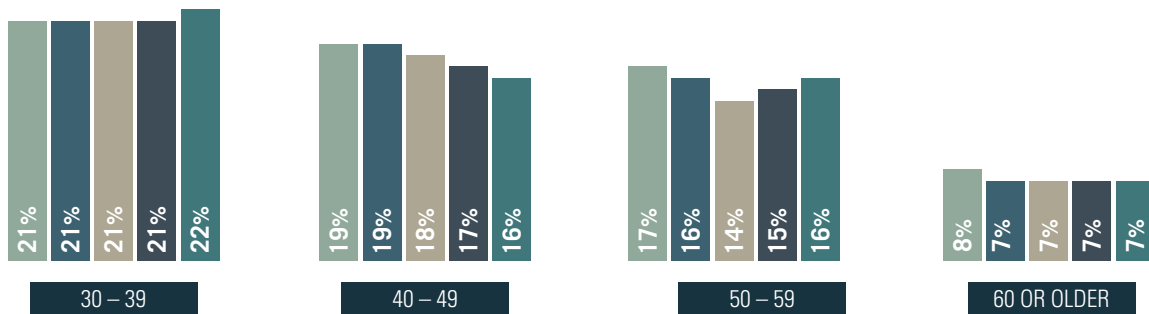
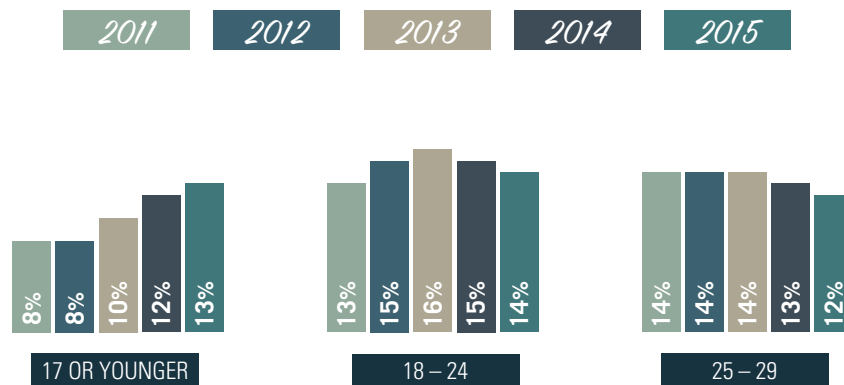


2%
DID NOT REPORT THEIR GENDER

AGE

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF EMERGENCY SHELTER RESIDENTS

Between 2011 and 2015, the age distribution of individuals accessing emergency shelter has remained fairly consistent. Overall, the number of younger individuals accessing emergency shelter increased between 2011 and 2015, while the number of older individuals decreased.



The age category with the greatest increase since 2011 was individuals 17 years old or younger,⁶ which increased from 8% in 2011 to 13% in 2015, representing 46 more individuals aged 17 and under accessing emergency shelter in 2015 than in 2011.

The age category with the greatest decrease in shelter use was the 40-49 age category, decreasing from 19% in 2011 to 16% in 2015. The 60 years and over age category has consistently represented the smallest number of individuals, with individuals in this age category 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

Since 2011, the age of the youngest independent individual to access emergency shelter has decreased from 18 years old in 2011 to 16 years old in 2015, with the youngest individual to access emergency shelter being 15 years of age in 2014.

The age of the oldest individual has varied each year, from 96 years old in 2011 to 82 years old in 2015. The average age of emergency shelter users has generally remained consistent since 2011 at 39 years of age.

GENDER

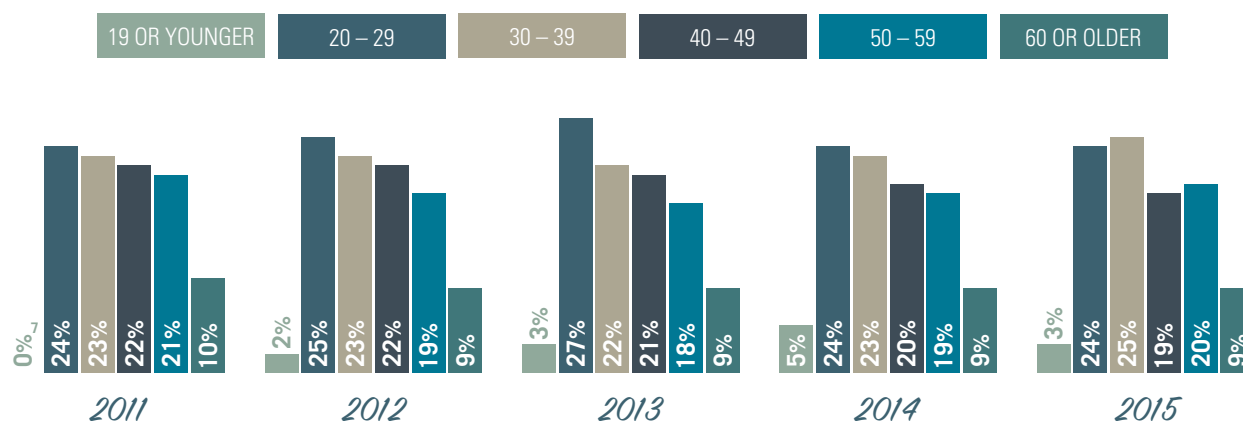
GENDER OF ADULTS ACCESSING EMERGENCY SHELTER

Since 2011, the percentage of adult males, compared to adult females, accessing emergency shelter has remained consistent, with adult males comprising approximately three-quarters of emergency shelter residents and adult females comprising approximately one-quarter of emergency shelter residents. Since 2013, the percentage of adult males and adult females accessing emergency shelter has remained unchanged.

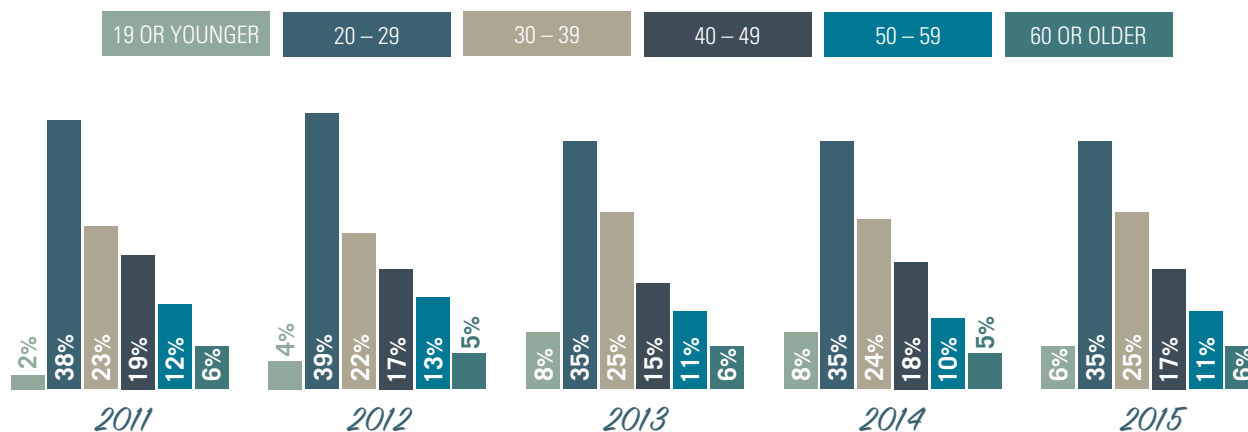


GENDER AND AGE DISTRIBUTION

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INDEPENDENT ADULT MALES





AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INDEPENDENT ADULT FEMALES



Between 2011 and 2015, the distribution of adult males and females across each age category of emergency shelter users has generally remained the same. 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. Further, younger individuals, both male and female, have consistently represented a greater percentage of the total number of emergency shelter users compared to older individuals.

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

GENDER, AGE RANGE, AND AVERAGE AGE

	MALE	YOUNGEST	AVERAGE	OLDEST
	2011	18	41	96
	2012	17	41	84
	2013	17	49	87
	2014	15	40	95
	2015	16	40	82
	FEMALE	YOUNGEST	AVERAGE	OLDEST
	2011	18	36	82
	2012	17	36	81
	2013	16	35	84
	2014	17	35	79
	2015	16	36	80

Overall, the youngest age of independent males and females has decreased by two years between 2011 and 2015. Since 2011, the oldest age of independent individuals accessing emergency shelter has decreased for both males and females. The oldest age decreased by 14 years for males and by two years for females between 2011 and 2015.

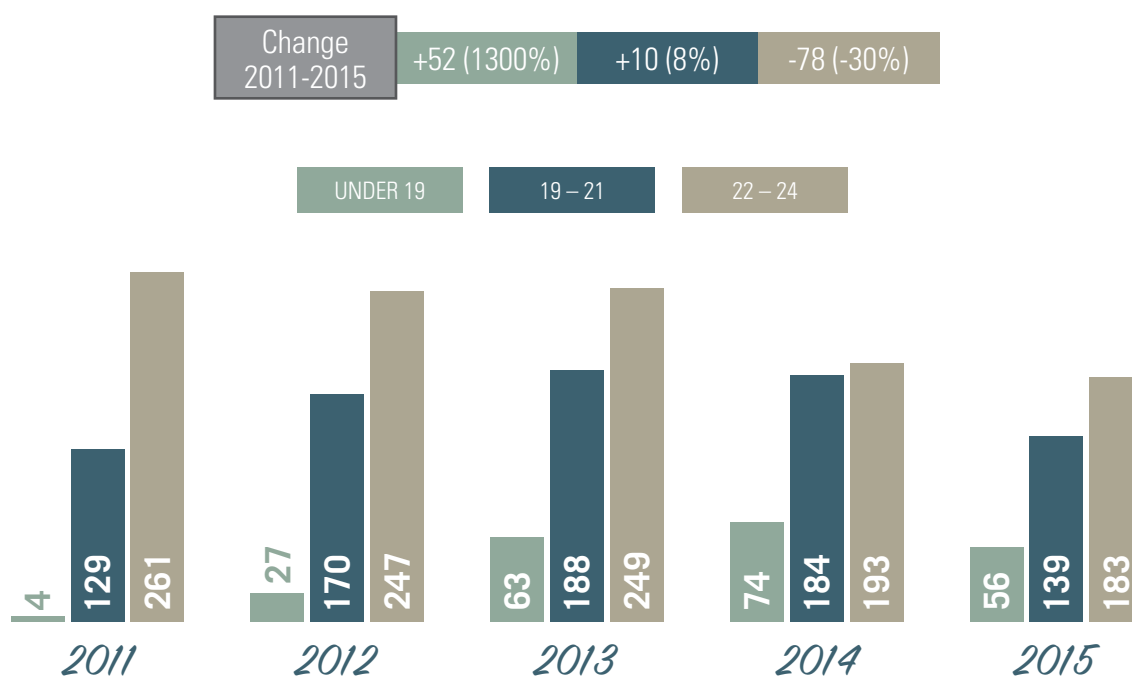
The average age for both independent males and females has remained relatively consistent since 2011, with the exception of the average age for independent males, which increased to 49 years in 2013.

Between 2011 and 2015, 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

When comparing 2011 and 2015 data, although the total number of unique individuals accessing emergency shelter has decreased, the number of young shelter users has increased.

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



Between 2011 and 2015, the number of independent youth under 19 years of age accessing emergency shelter has increased each year, except for 2015. The number of independent youth increased from 4 individuals in 2011 to 74 individuals in 2014, before decreasing by a quarter in 2015 to 56 individuals.

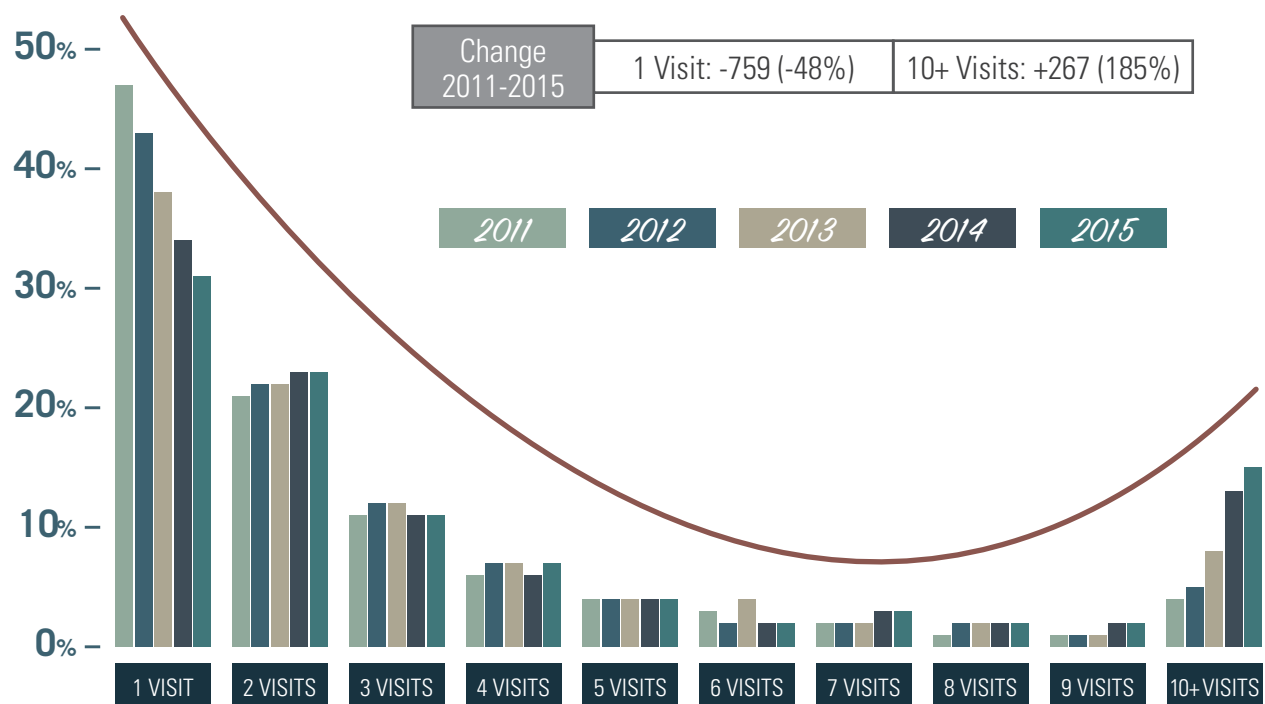
The number of independent youth 19-21 years of age accessing emergency shelter increased each year between 2011 and 2013. Since 2013 there has been a slight decline in the number of youth 19-21 years of age accessing emergency shelter.

Between 2011 and 2015, the number of independent youth aged 22-24 years old accessing emergency shelter has decreased by 30%, from 261 individuals in 2011 to 183 individuals in 2015. Emergency shelter use by independent youth 22-24 years of age follows the same downward trend as the total number of unique individuals accessing emergency shelter since 2011. Although the number of independent youth aged 22-24 years old has decreased, this population has consistently constituted approximately 7% of the total emergency shelter population each year.

HOW ARE LONDON'S EMERGENCY SHELTERS BEING USED?

NUMBER OF VISITS⁸

NUMBER OF VISITS TO EMERGENCY SHELTERS



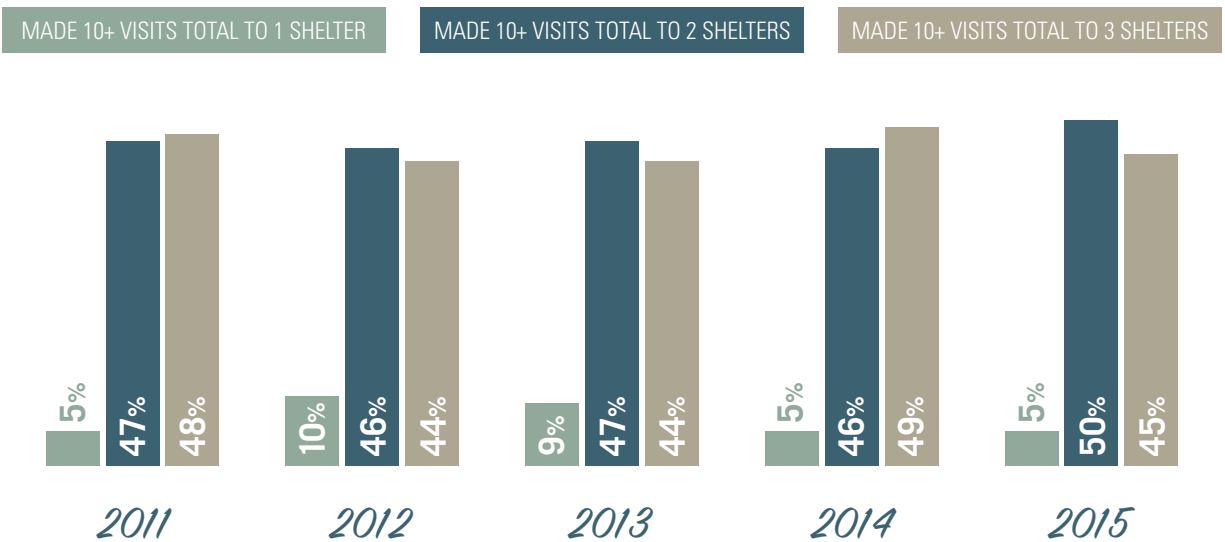
Since 2011, the percentage of unique individuals who visited an emergency shelter one time has decreased each year from about half of all visits to one-third of all visits. Between 2011 and 2015, the percentage of individuals who used emergency shelter three times or less has also decreased each year.

Conversely, the number of individuals accessing emergency shelter more than ten times has increased from 4% (144 individuals) in 2011 to 15% (411 individuals) in 2015.

Further, the maximum number of emergency shelter visits has doubled since 2011, from 31 visits in 2011 to 65 visits in 2015.

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

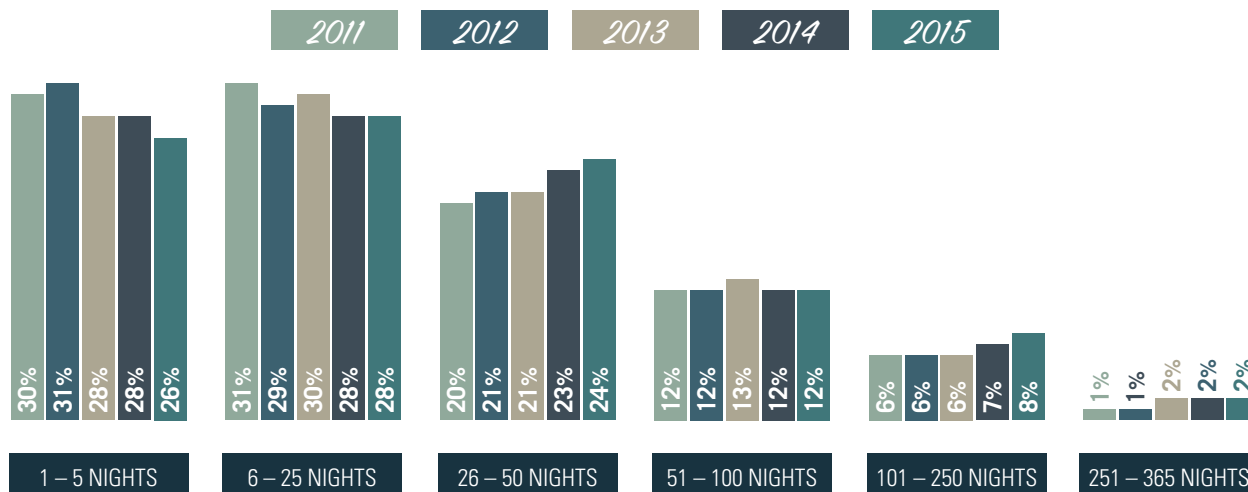


Of the individuals who made ten or more visits to emergency shelters between 2011 and 2015, few visited only one shelter.⁹ Most individuals who made ten or more visits to emergency shelters visited two or three different shelters. This pattern remained consistent between 2011 and 2015.

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 STAYED

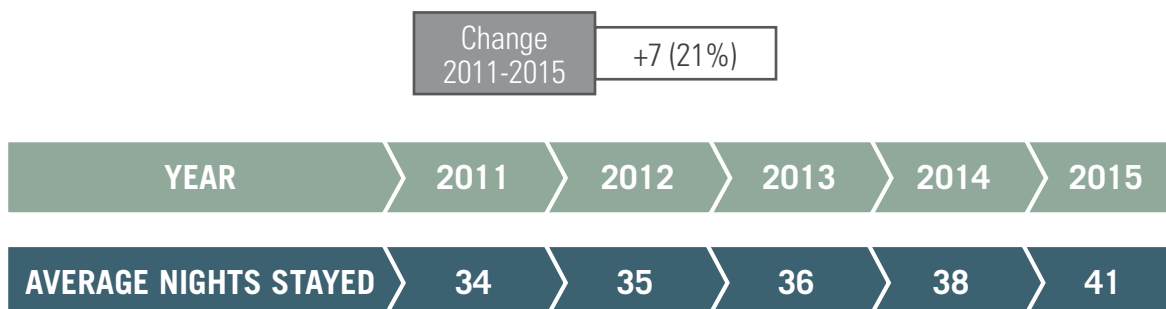
NUMBER OF NIGHTS STAYED IN EMERGENCY SHELTER



Since 2011, the percentage of unique individuals who stayed in emergency shelter for 25 or fewer nights decreased from 61% in 2011 to 54% in 2015.¹⁰ However, the percentage of individuals who stayed between 26 and 50 nights increased from 20% to 24% between 2011 and 2015. Further, the percentage of individuals staying over 50 nights in emergency shelter also increased from 19% in 2011 to 22% in 2015.

Between 2011 and 2015, approximately one-third of emergency shelter users stayed between one and five nights. Another one-third stayed between six and 25 nights. The remaining one-third of shelter users stayed between 26 and 365 nights.

AVERAGE NIGHTS STAYED



Since 2011, the average number of nights stayed in emergency shelter has increased each year, from 34 nights in 2011 to 41 nights in 2015, representing an increase of seven nights in shelter.

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

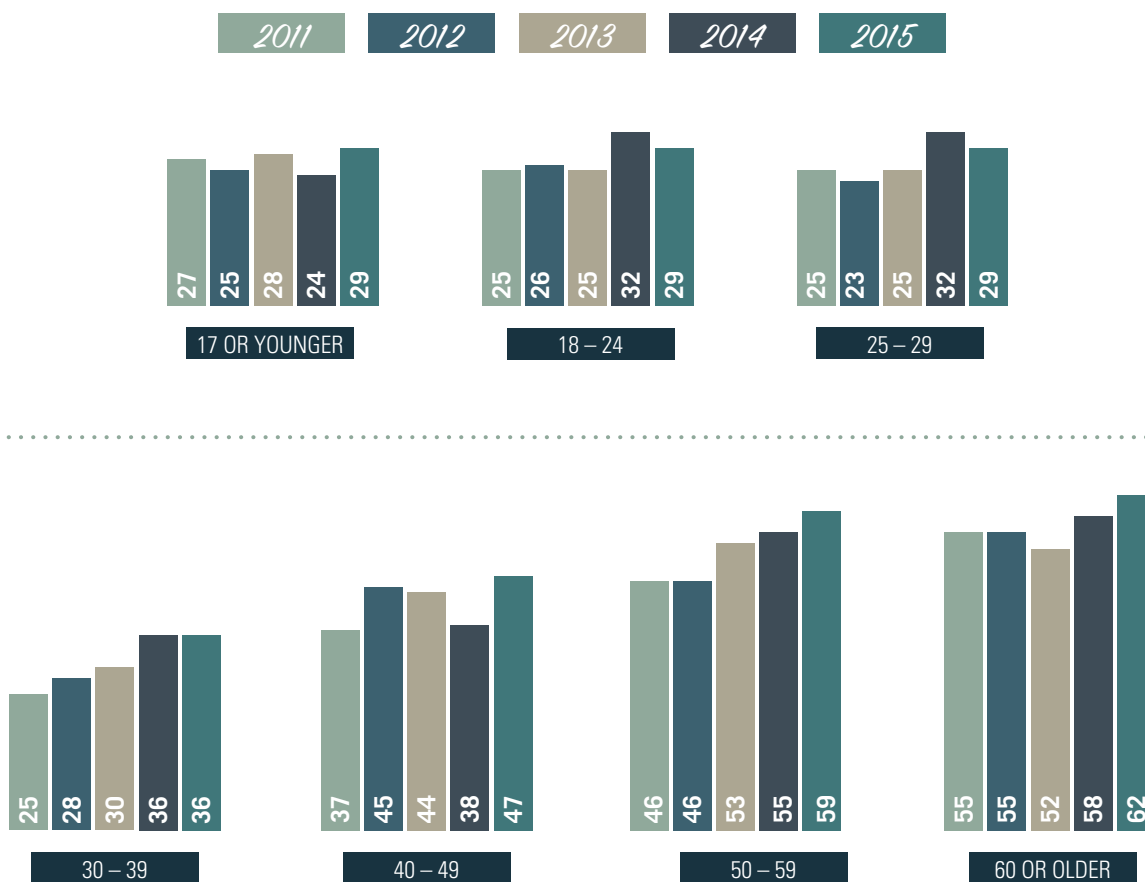
NUMBER OF NIGHTS STAYED OVER 365

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
335 to 364 Nights	4	10	12	11	17
365 Nights	3	1	1	4	7
Over 365 Nights	7	7	4	5	2
Total Individuals	14	18	17	20	26

Since 2011, the number of individuals who stayed in shelter 11 months or more (335 days - 365+) almost doubled, increasing from 14 individuals in 2011 to 26 individuals in 2015.

Some individuals were reported as staying in emergency shelter more than 365 days in a one-year period. This is a result of individuals being registered in more than one shelter on the same night. The number of individuals reported as staying more than 365 days has decreased since 2011.

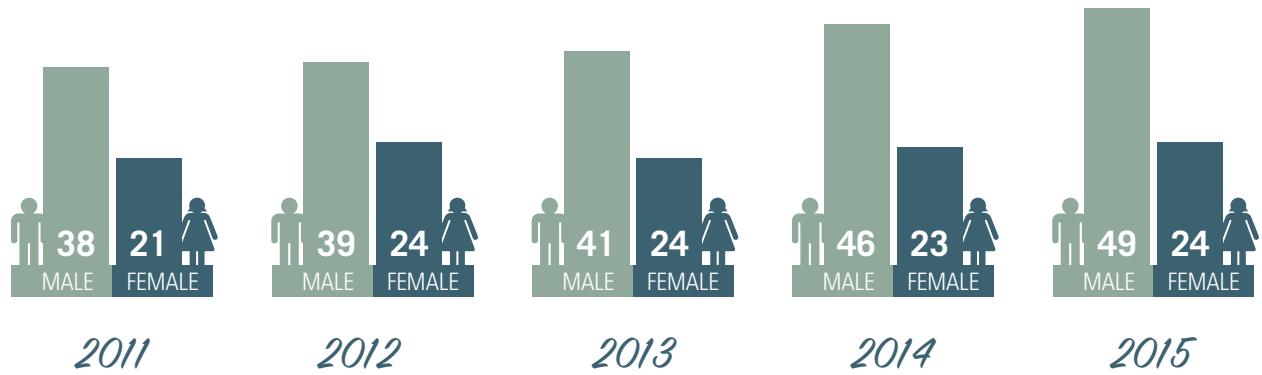
AGE AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF NIGHTS STAYED



The number of nights stayed increased by two nights for individuals 17 years of age and younger and by four nights for individuals between 18 and 29.¹¹ For individuals over 30 years of age, the number of nights stayed in emergency shelter has increased by an average of ten nights. The average number of nights stayed generally increased with age.

¹¹ Includes dependent children and youth.

GENDER AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF NIGHTS STAYED



Since 2011, the average number of nights stayed by adult males has increased each year, from 38 in 2011 to 49 in 2015, representing an overall increase of 11 nights in shelter. The average number of nights stayed by adult females increased from 21 nights in 2011 to 24 nights in 2012, and has remained between 23 and 24 nights since 2012.

MOVING TO ACTION

Key indicators convey a compelling case about the need for system change in London to better address, reduce, and prevent homelessness:

- **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 tripled.
- **Individuals are staying longer in emergency shelter.** The percentage of individuals staying 25 nights or less 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 2015.
- **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 ten 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 195 in 2015, 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 2015, 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 2015, in comparison to 27% of males in the same age range.

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 94% between 2011 and 2014. A Housing First emergency shelter for youth is under development and scheduled to open in 2018.

Further, there is a trend of independent youth under 16 years of age accessing emergency shelter. A practice is needed to prevent youth under the age of 16 from staying in an adult emergency shelter bed and to end their experience of homelessness.

A Homeless Management Information System

More than 95% of individuals visiting emergency shelter more than ten times access 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 Homeless Management Information System would 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.

Review 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. Based on the information collected, this practice is currently under review.

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. Further, the increase in the number of nights individuals are remaining in shelter indicates a trend toward increased chronic homelessness in London. This sector of the emergency shelter population requires a specialized approach to secure and maintain housing stability through an intensive case management and Housing First approach.

CONCLUSION

The data in London's Emergency Shelters Progress Report: 2011-2015 provides valuable information regarding the overall demographics of emergency shelter users, including details of who has been accessing emergency shelters, how many individuals have been accessing emergency shelters, and how long individuals have been staying in emergency shelters. This report also outlines data trends observed in emergency shelter use between 2011 and 2015.

Results from this report provide an opportunity for London to measure and track progress over time, guide future decision-making, and create solutions toward solving homelessness together. Solving homelessness in London will require actionable and measurable strategies. One such strategy, approved by City Council, is the development of a youth shelter starting in 2017.

London's
EMERGENCY SHELTERS

PROGRESS REPORT: 2011 – 2015
