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INTRODUCTION

In 2016, the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination and County of Wellington Social Services (“the County”) made a strategic decision to co-lead a local initiative under the umbrella of the national 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.”¹

Since joining the campaign, the Poverty Task Force (PTF) and the County have coordinated two successful joint Registry Week / Point-in-Time Counts, became the fourth community in Canada to establish a Quality By-Name List (BNL), and launched a Coordinated Access System (CAS) that has transformed the local homeless-serving system.

In 2015, the Government of Ontario announced it aimed to end chronic homelessness in 10 years.² Two years later, the Government of Canada announced the first ever National Housing Strategy with the goal of cutting chronic homelessness by 50% in 10 years.³ This was followed by the 2018 release of *Reaching Home*, Canada’s Homelessness Strategy, representing the

most significant change in federal homelessness programming since the introduction of the National Homelessness Initiative in 1999. *Reaching Home* embeds two essential strategies for preventing and reducing homelessness: By-Name Lists and Coordinated Access Systems.⁴

With a Quality BNL, a robust CAS, and a focus on ending chronic homelessness locally, Guelph-Wellington aligns well with political goals. However, further improvements in the local homeless-serving system are necessary. Data in this report demonstrates that individuals experiencing chronic homelessness have increased in from April 2018 to October 2018 and inflow to the system regularly exceeds outflow.

This report is intended to provide insights and inform decisions as Guelph-Wellington works toward ending chronic homelessness. It provides analysis of those on the BNL, including individual adults, unaccompanied youth, and family members, who have experienced chronic homelessness in the community from November 2017 to October 2018. It is expected that this report will be used to drive measurable improvements within the homeless-serving system in the next year.

¹ 20,000 Homes (n.d.). “About.” Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. Available here: <http://www.20khomes.ca/about/>

² Government of Ontario (October 2015). “Ontario Commits to Ending Chronic Homelessness in 10 Years.” Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Available here: <https://news.ontario.ca/mma/en/2015/10/report-of-the-expert-advisory-panel-on-homelessness.html>

³ National Housing Strategy (2017). “A Place to Call Home.” Available here: <https://www.placetocalhome.ca/>

⁴ Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (June 2018). “Reaching Home? Canada’s New Homelessness Strategy.” Available here: <http://caeh.ca/reaching-home/>

TIMELINES & KEY CONCEPTS

Over the past few years, the homeless-serving system in Guelph-Wellington has undergone a transformation, fuelled in part by the development of a **By-Name List** and the launch of a **Coordinated Access System** and the desire to achieve an end to chronic homelessness, or ‘functional zero.’ A functional end to chronic homelessness is defined by 20,000 Homes as 3 or less people experiencing chronic homelessness as measured by a quality By-Name List.⁵

The Guelph-Wellington BNL was initiated following a joint **Registry Week / Point-in-Time Count** in April 2016. During this time, person-specific data was collected from individuals experiencing homelessness using a Common Assessment Tool – the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (**VI-SPDAT**).

Initially, the Guelph-Wellington BNL was used to set community targets toward reducing homelessness among the most vulnerable individuals (those that scored in the high acuity range on the VI-SPDAT). During this time, individuals from the BNL that moved into housing were counted toward a local goal of housing 30 of the most vulnerable within 6 months following Registry Week. In November 2016, it was announced that the community exceeded this target, moving in a total of 38 high-acuity individuals from the BNL.

In February 2017, the Guelph-Wellington **Coordinated Access System (CAS)** was launched. The CAS provided an opportunity to monitor inflow and outflow from the BNL and increase transparency and accountability toward the goal of ending homelessness. The CAS also prioritized individuals for referrals

to housing services and supports based on their acuity score.

In April 2018, Guelph-Wellington became the fourth community in Canada to achieve a **Quality By-Name List (QBNL)**. To achieve this, a community must submit reliable BNL data for at least three consecutive months and achieve a perfect score on a scorecard provided by the national 20,000 Homes campaign.

At this time, a decision was made by the Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Operations Committee to shift away from CAS referrals based solely on acuity scores. To align with the national campaign, as well as to ensure a diversity of critical indicators informed referrals, the CAS began prioritizing individuals on the BNL based on their acuity score, as well as chronicity (number of months homeless).

In July 2018, the 20,000 Homes Campaign announced that in addition to housing 20,000 of the most vulnerable, they aimed to end chronic homelessness in 20 communities across Canada. The County of Wellington took on the role of community lead for the local movement and joined 37 other communities from across Canada as part of the 20KHomes Collaborative. As a participating community, partners from Guelph-Wellington attend in-person Learning Sessions, receive support from the 20KHomes team on quality improvement and data, and report monthly BNL data.

See Figure 1 and Figure 2 on page 6 for timelines and definitions of key concepts.

⁵ For larger communities with more than 4,000 actively homeless on their BNL, chronic homelessness accounts for less than 0.1%

of their actively homeless as measured by a quality BNL to achieve a functional end to chronic homelessness.

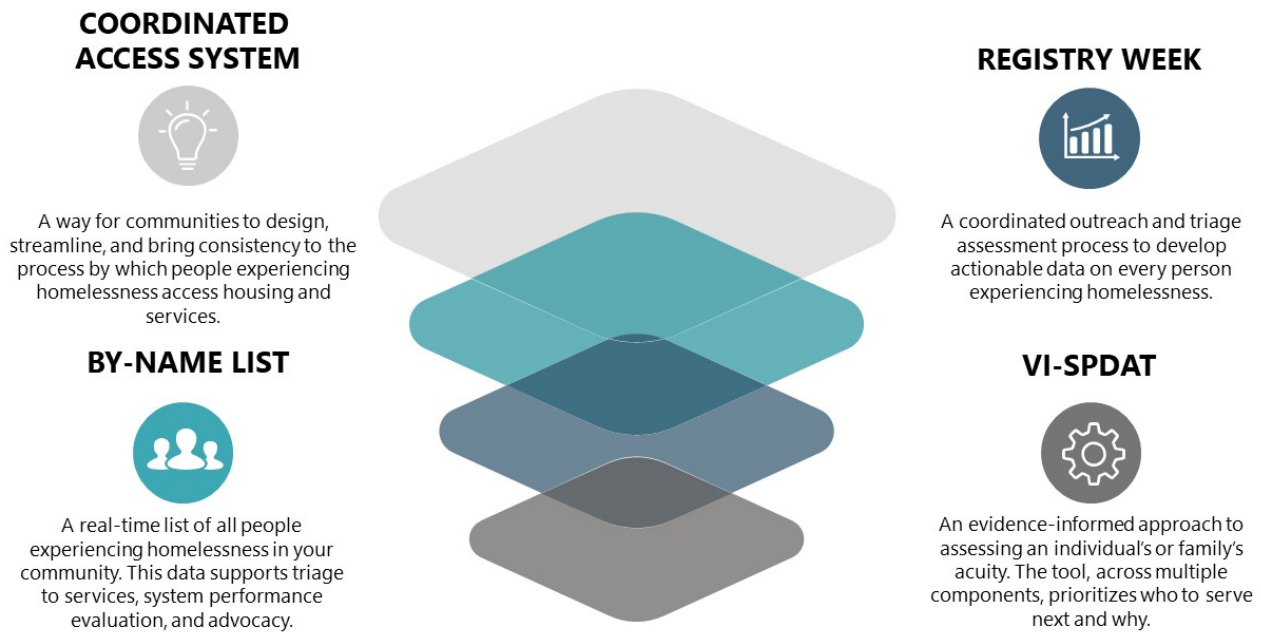


Figure 1: Key Concepts in the Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Campaign

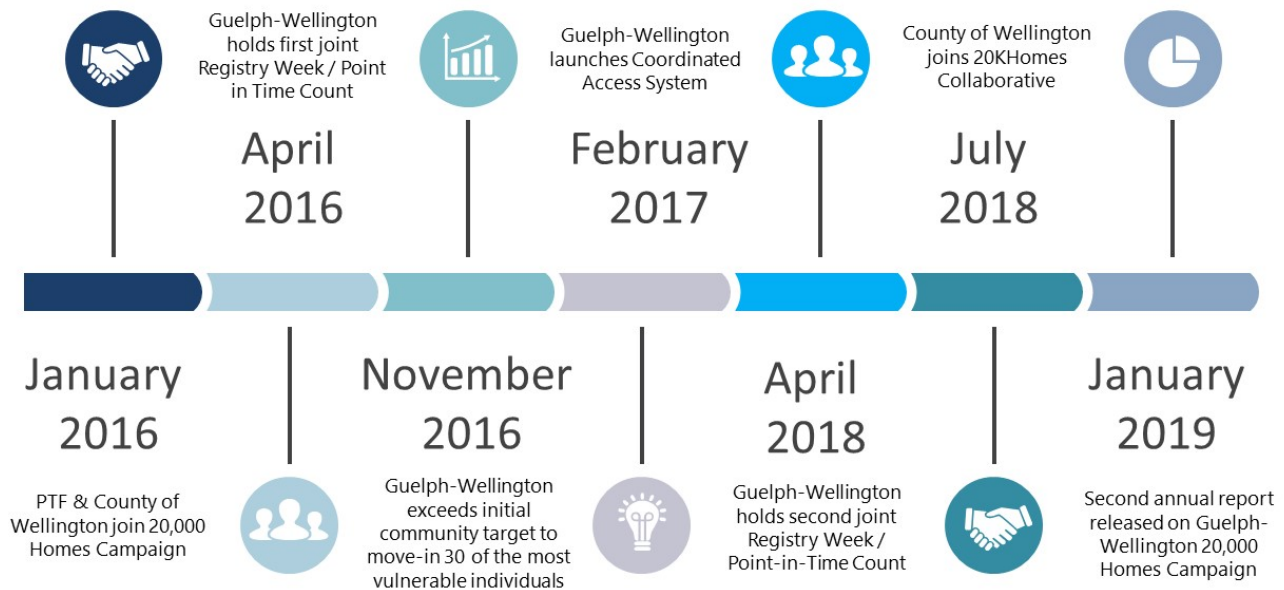


Figure 2: Timeline of the Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Campaign

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress made as part of the Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes Campaign from November 1, 2017 to October 31, 2018. This report focuses primarily on a specific sub-population – families and individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Locally, **chronic homelessness** is defined as experiencing homelessness for six consecutive months or more.

The 2016/17 annual report, released November 2016, focused on a slightly different sub-population – high acuity families and individuals. It is important to note that these two sub-populations are not mutually exclusive. In fact, many individuals that experience chronic homelessness also fall into the category of high acuity. However, the shift toward focusing on ending chronic homelessness by the national 20,000 Homes Campaign, along with Provincial and Federal Government targets, led local decision-makers to align reporting.

This report covers the different components of the BNL – inflow, outflow, and active homelessness. Each component is broken down further to provide deep insights into the movement experienced by individuals on the BNL.

The report also breaks down the data to look at three specific groups – individual adults, unaccompanied youth, and family members.

- Individual adults are 25 years and over. They may be in a relationship with another individual experiencing homelessness but complete the VI-SPDAT independently. They may also have children, but who are not currently in their care.
- Unaccompanied youth are between the ages of 16 and 24 years who are not currently living with a parent or guardian. In this case, individuals complete a youth-specific VI-SPDAT.
- Family members include parents or guardians that currently have children in their care. Family members also includes the children from these families, between the ages of 0 – 18 years. Families typically have one parent or guardian complete a family-specific VI-SPDAT for the entire family.

This report, along with more frequent and consistent monitoring efforts of the BNL, can help key partners in the community to make strategic, data-informed system improvements to end chronic homelessness in Guelph-Wellington.



Figure 3: Definitions of population groups

RESULTS

BY-NAME LIST SNAPSHOT

The By-Name List monitors individuals (including individual adults, unaccompanied youth, and family members) experiencing homelessness and their movement in and out of the homeless-serving system. This is not a static list. Individuals are continually being added in real-time as they enter the system

and complete the VI-SPDAT as part of the CAS. Likewise, the status changes of individuals are being regularly updated (e.g. an individual moving from active homeless to a housing move-in).

The following provides a snapshot of the BNL during the reporting period of November 2017 to October 2018 for (Table 1).

	Inflow			Outflow		Active Homeless
	Newly identified	Returned from Housing	Returned from Inactive	Housing Move-Ins	Inactive	
November 2017	9	7	2	26	8	135
December 2017	15	7	4	18	8	135
January 2018	28	9	2	14	10	150
February 2018	14	8	7	30	4	145
March 2018	18	3	2	17	9	142
April 2018	105	8	7	17	8	237
May 2018	3	3	2	40	21	184
June 2018	10	3	12	10	12	187
July 2018	12	8	2	13	8	188
August 2018	20	3	1	12	5	195
September 2018	13	3	0	11	4	196
October 2018	23	3	1	22	6	195

Table 1: Snapshot of Guelph-Wellington By-Name List

This report focuses specifically on individuals and family members experiencing **chronic** homelessness. The following provides a snapshot of this specific population (Table 2).

The remainder of this report focuses on individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

	Inflow (Chronic)			Outflow (Chronic)		Active Homeless (Chronic)
	Newly Identified	Returned from Housing	Returned from Inactive	Housing Move-In	Inactive	
November 2017	6	6	2	16	6	112
December 2017	13	6	4	12	8	115
January 2018	16	8	2	10	9	122
February 2018	18	7	7	25	4	125
March 2018	15	3	2	12	9	124
April 2018	58	6	7	13	8	174
May 2018	13	3	2	27	19	146
June 2018	12	3	12	9	10	154
July 2018	18	8	2	10	8	164
August 2018	23	2	1	12	4	174
September 2018	16	3	0	11	4	178
October 2018	7	3	1	18	6	165

Table 2: Snapshot of Guelph-Wellington By-Name List – Chronic

Over the course of the reporting period, inflow was generally higher than outflow. However, there were three months (November, May and October) that outflow exceeded inflow (although outflow in May was high due to a data clean up following the joint Registry Week / Point in Time Count) (Figure 4).

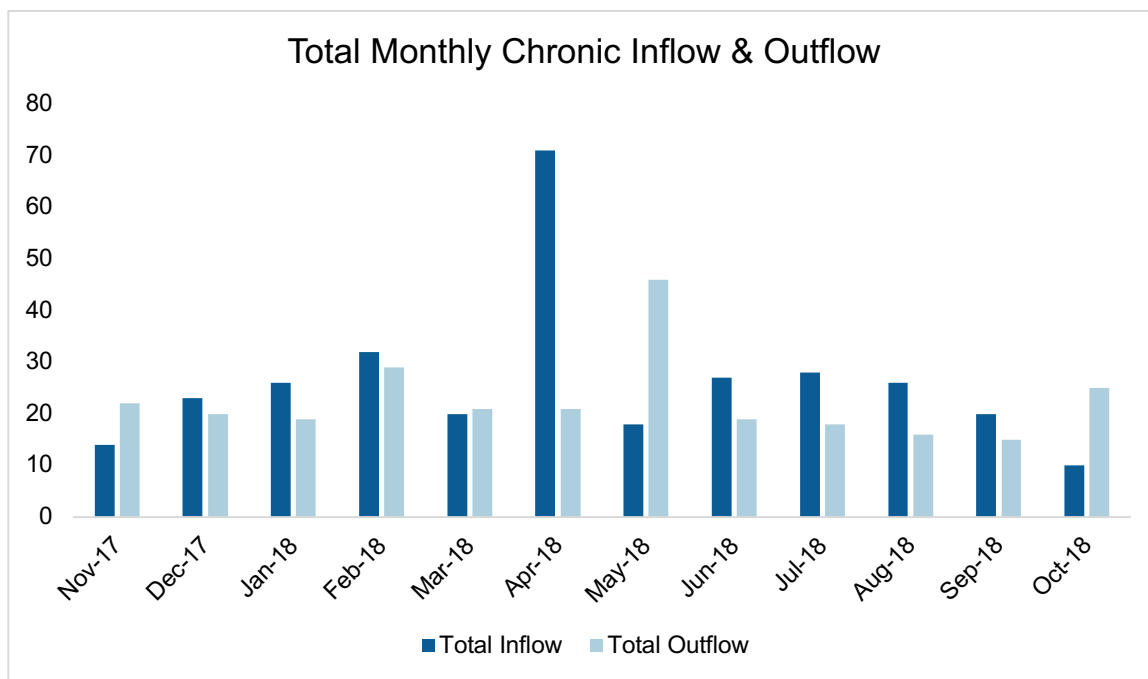


Figure 4: Total monthly chronic inflow and outflow

ACTIVE CHRONIC HOMELESS

Active homeless includes all people experiencing chronic homelessness in Guelph-Wellington who are active in the system at the end of the month. Any change to this number is accounted for in either inflow or outflow for data to balance.

While the number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness fluctuated from month to month, BNL data demonstrates that there was a 46% increase from November 2017 compared to October 2018. A sharp spike occurred in April 2018 because of the joint Registry Week / Point-in-Time Count, in

which focused outreach efforts to identify those experiencing chronic homelessness who were not yet on the BNL. While the number dipped in the following month (due in part to a data cleanup), it climbed steadily until September, before dropping down again in October (see Figure 5).

A median is considered to determine if there were any significant trends or shifts throughout the reporting period. Overall, the median number of individuals active experiencing chronic homelessness over the reporting period was 150 per month.

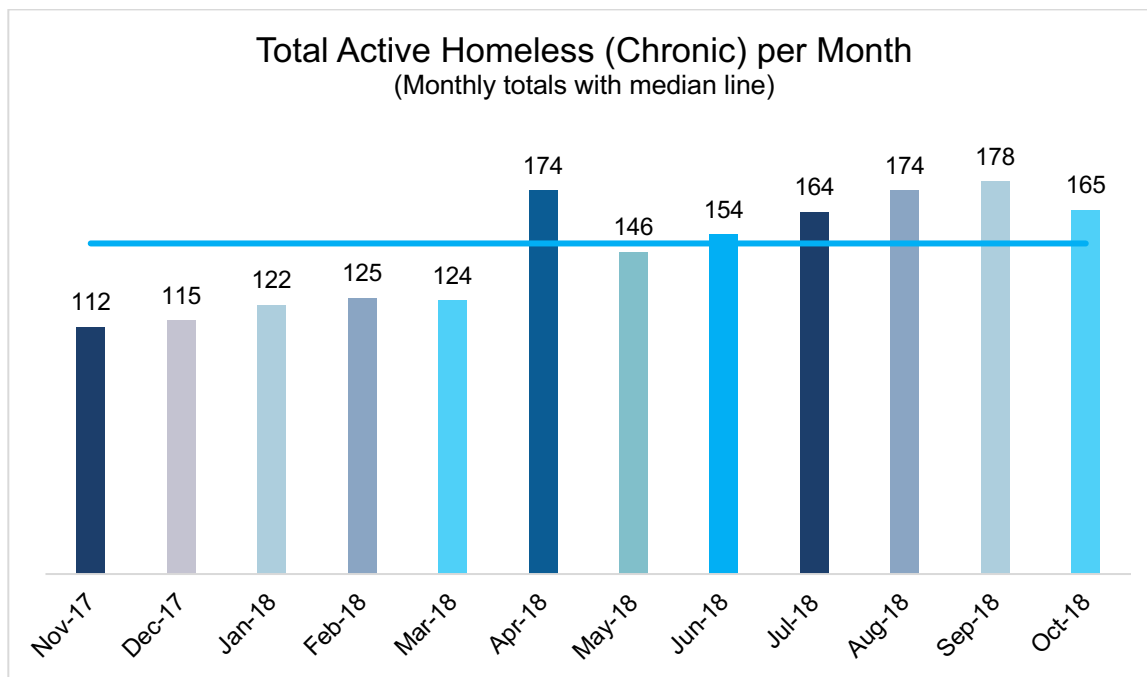


Figure 5: Total active chronic homeless per month

Further analysis by group shows that the number of active homeless adults exceeds youth and family members. This is not surprising given the larger age category for adults. However, it is worth noting that during the first five months of the reporting period, the gap between the number of adults and

number of youth was relatively smaller compared to the rest of the reporting period. When the joint Registry Week / Point-in-Time Count occurred in April, the number of adults spiked, while the number of youth and family members remained relatively stable (see Figure 6).

These findings suggest that the current CAS system is accurately capturing the inflow and outflow of youth and families, but that quite a few adults were not being captured until a

broad and intentional outreach strategy was used (Registry Week / Point-in-Time Count). This identifies an area for improvement within the current CAS.

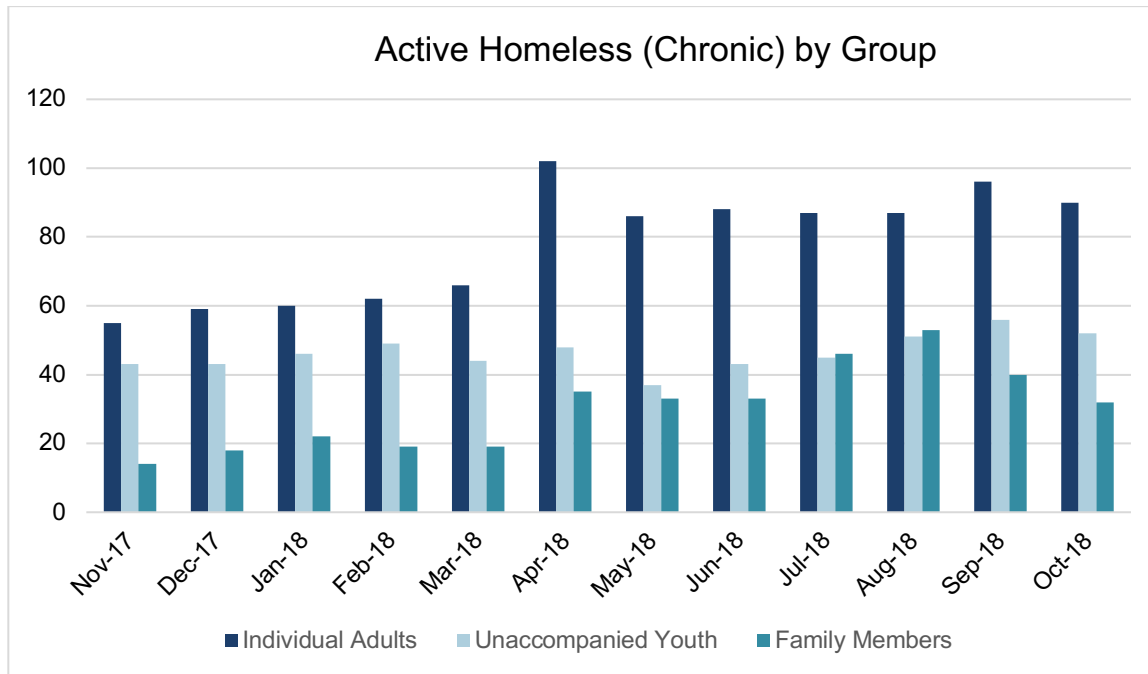


Figure 6: Active chronic homeless by population group

At the start of the reporting period (November 2017), there were 112 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Of those, 86 (77%) experienced outflow (housing move-in or moved to inactive) in the following 12 months. This means that 25 (23%) remained active homeless throughout the entire reporting period, including 15 adults, 7 youth, and 3 family members (representing 1 family).

Under the current CAS, individuals are being prioritized from the BNL for housing supports and services based on two primary factors – chronicity (# of months homeless) and acuity

(based on their VI-SPDAT score). Many individuals that meet the definition of chronic homelessness score in the high acuity range, which indicates they require intensive supports to find and maintain housing stability. On average, 66% of individuals active experiencing chronic homelessness over the reporting period also scored in the high acuity range. The percentage of youth active experiencing chronic homeless with a high acuity score is relatively higher throughout the reporting period (with the exception of March) compared to adults and family members (see Figure 7).

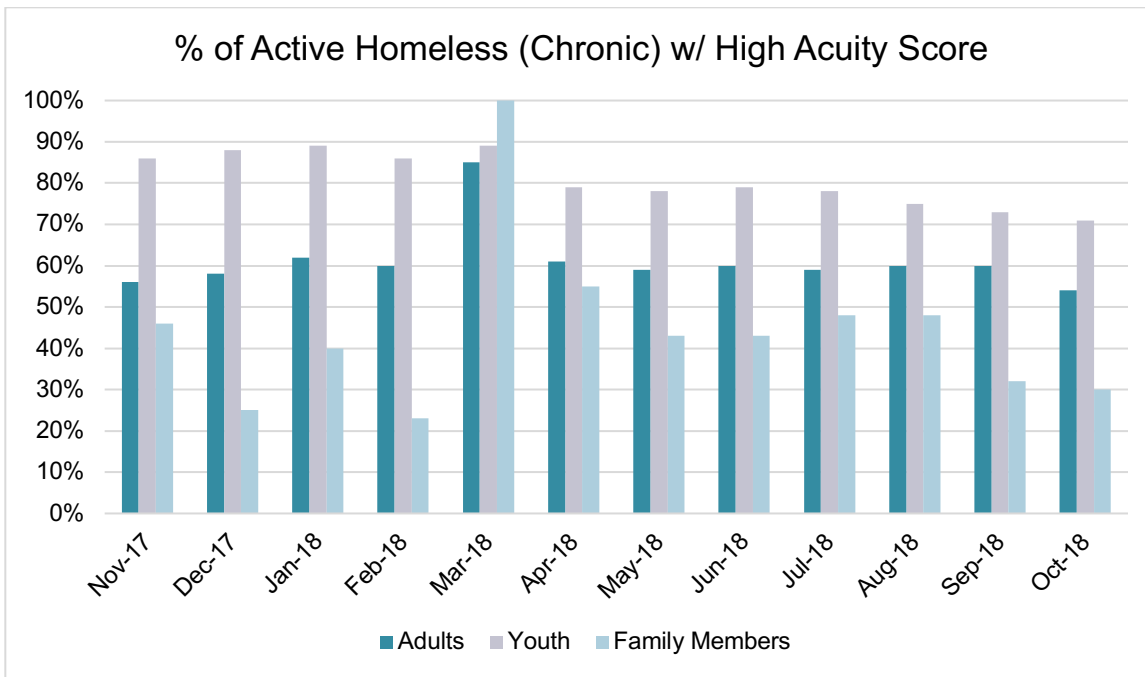


Figure 7: Percent of active chronic homeless with high acuity score

Active homeless individuals on the BNL are further broken down into three categories – active: connected, active: homeless, and active: temporarily housed. Those identified as ‘active: connected’ are actively experiencing chronic homelessness and are connected to a housing-specific support, such as a Housing First worker. Individuals that are ‘active: temporarily housed’ are actively experiencing chronic homelessness but are housed in a situation that is

considered temporary (e.g. living in a motel, short-term transitional housing, etc.). Finally, those that are ‘active: homeless’ are actively experiencing chronic homelessness and while they may be connected to supports and services, they are not housing-specific.

Analysis of the BNL data demonstrates that most active homeless individuals are without temporary housing or housing-specific supports and services (see Figure 8).

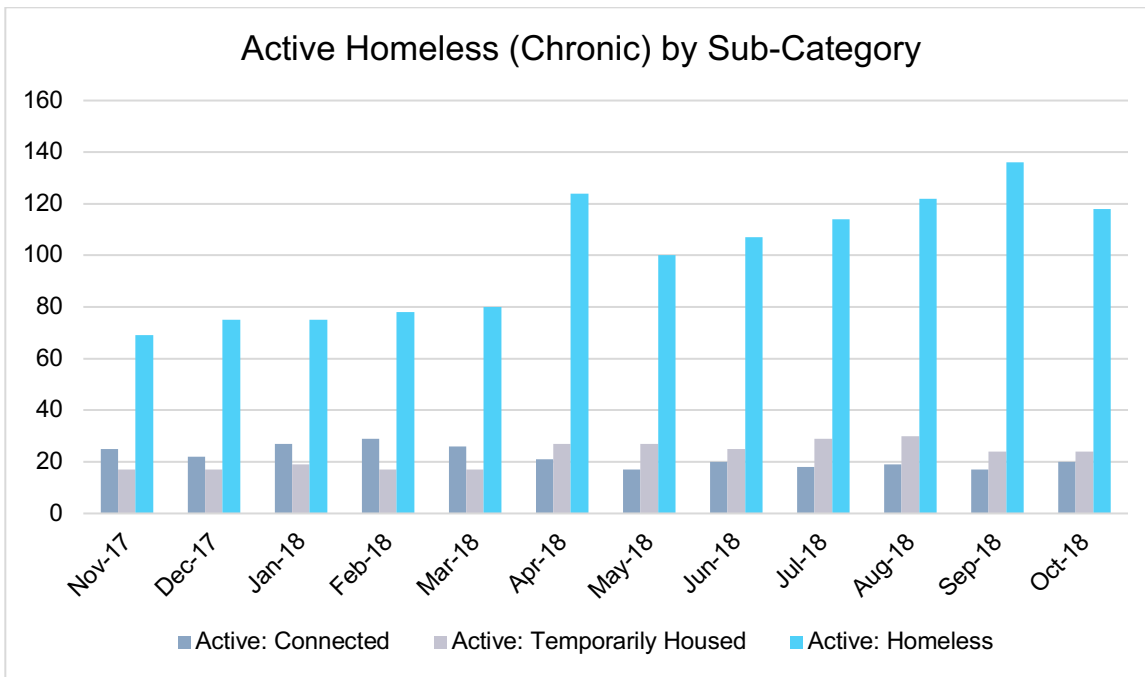


Figure 8: Active chronic homeless by sub-category

Further analysis demonstrates that the number of adults and youth that are actively homeless who are connected to housing-specific supports is quite small (only one family was ‘active: connected’ during the reporting period). Additionally, the number of ‘active: connected’ youth exceed the number of ‘active: connected’ adults, despite adults exceeding youth in overall active homeless

numbers (see Figure 9). However, it is important to keep in mind that this data only provides insights into families and individuals who are both “connected” AND “active homeless.” It does not explain the number of families and individuals that have moved into housing and continue to be connected with housing-specific supports to maintain their housing.

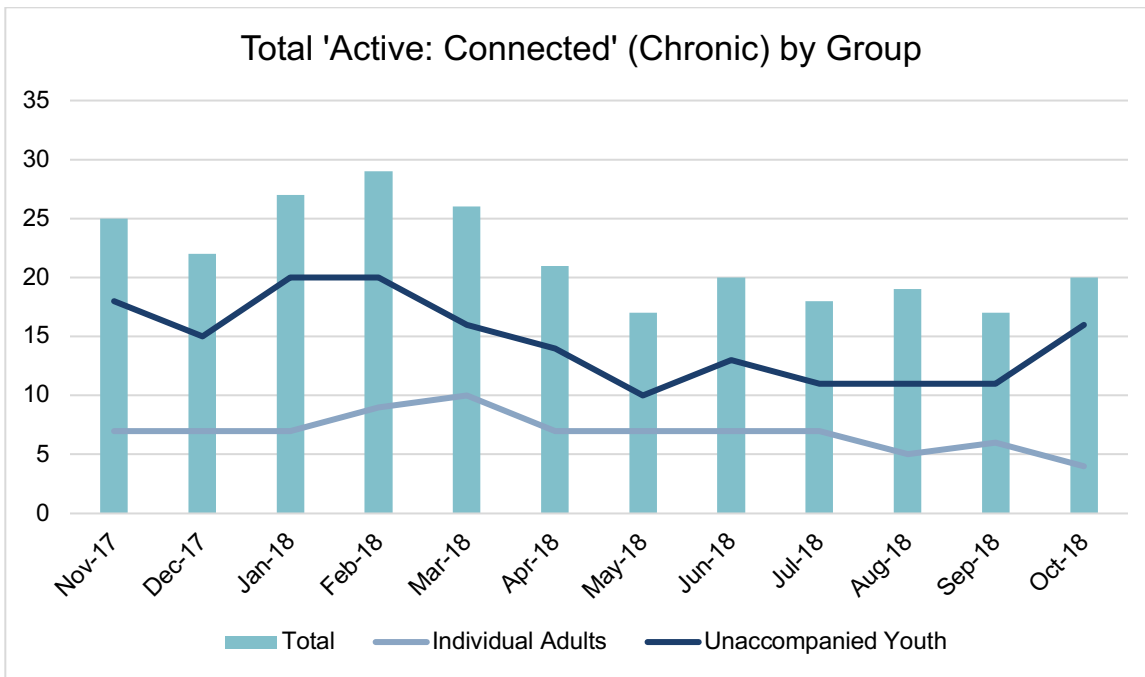


Figure 9: Total active chronic homeless connected to housing-specific support

CHRONIC OUTFLOW

Outflow accounts for people experiencing chronic homelessness in Guelph-Wellington that leave the system throughout the month. Total chronic outflow varied over the reporting period with a median of 20 individuals per month. The number shot up in May 2018, likely as part of a data clean up

following the joint Registry Week / Point-in-Time Count (see Figure 10).

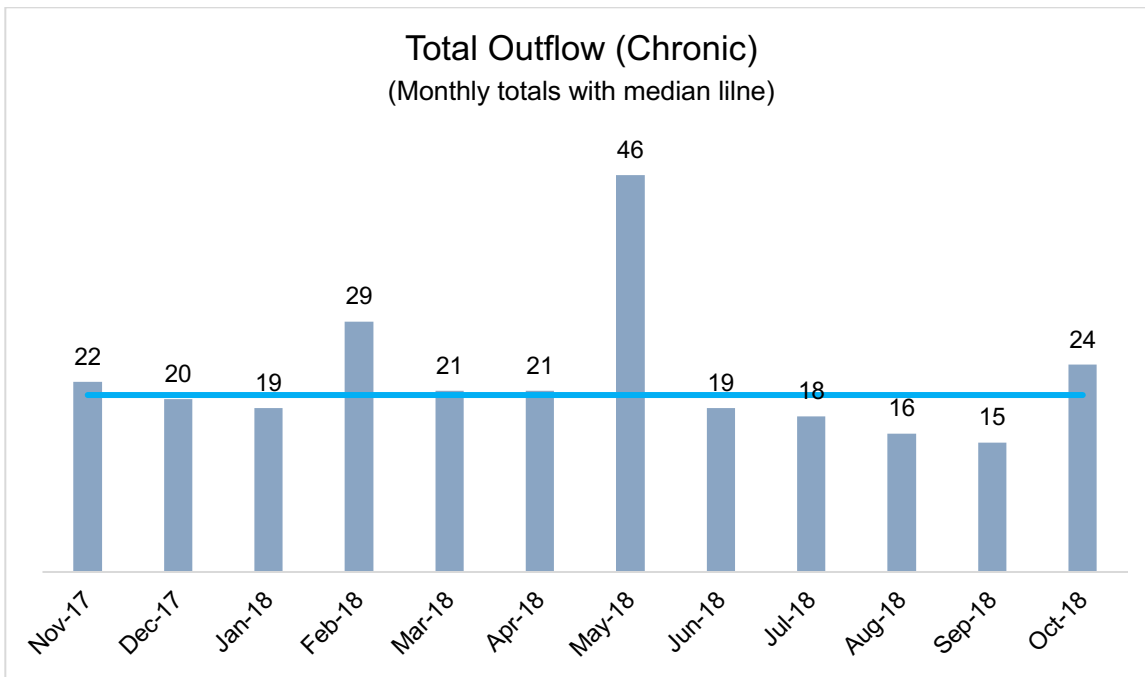


Figure 10: Total chronic outflow

Outflow consists of two categories – move-ins and inactive. Move-ins include all people experiencing chronic homelessness who move into permanent and/or long-term housing. Overall, the number of move-ins per month fluctuated from 9 to 27 over the course

of the reporting period, with a median of 12 per month (see Figure 11).

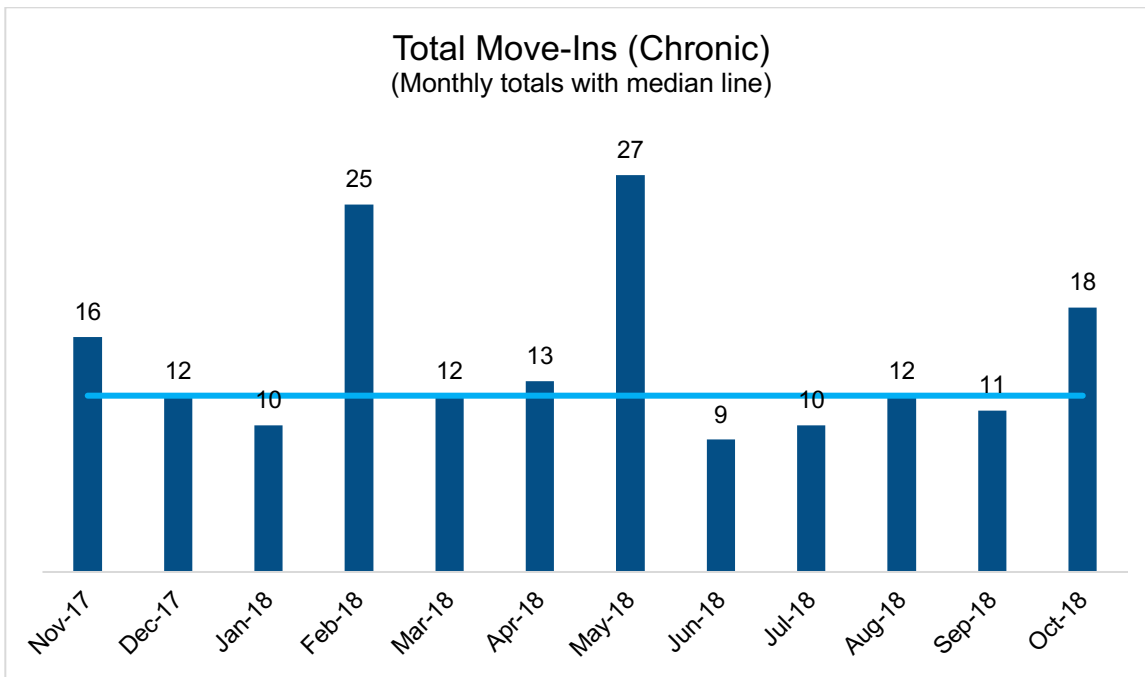


Figure 11: Total move-ins for chronic homeless

When broken down by sub-populations, adults generally accounted for more move-ins compared to youth and families (see Figure 12). It is worth noting that while the number

of family members may appear relatively high some months, it may account for only one or two total families.

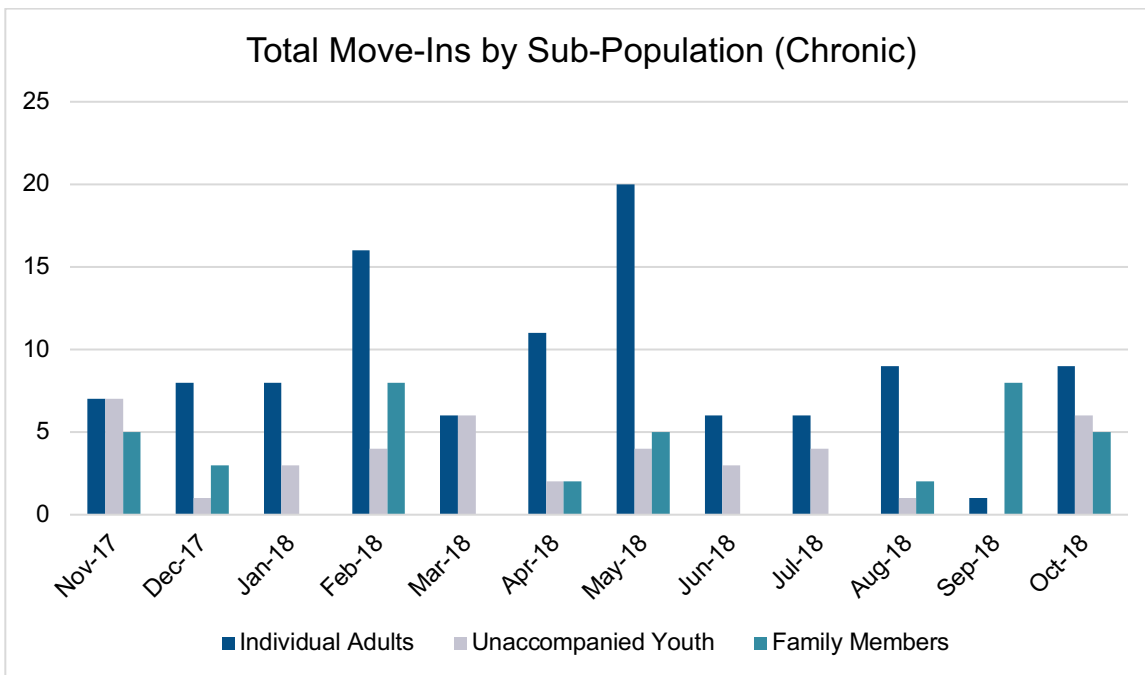


Figure 12: Total move-ins for chronic homeless by sub-population

An individual can move to inactive status on the BNL based on an inactivity policy that is part of the Guelph-Wellington CAS. According to this policy, an individual on the BNL can be marked 'inactive' after 90 days if they have moved to another community, become incarcerated, are staying within a system other than incarceration (e.g. treatment program), or have lost contact. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that individuals can easily be moved from 'inactive' to 'active homeless' if they connect with the homeless-serving system again without skewing the number of people

actively experiencing homelessness or divert outreach and engagement activities.

Overall, the number of individuals moving to an inactive status varied throughout the reporting period. The number is highest in May (19), because of a data clean up that occurred following the joint Registry Week / Point-in-Time Count.

When analyzed by inactive category, the main moves are related to incarceration and moving to another community (Figure 13).

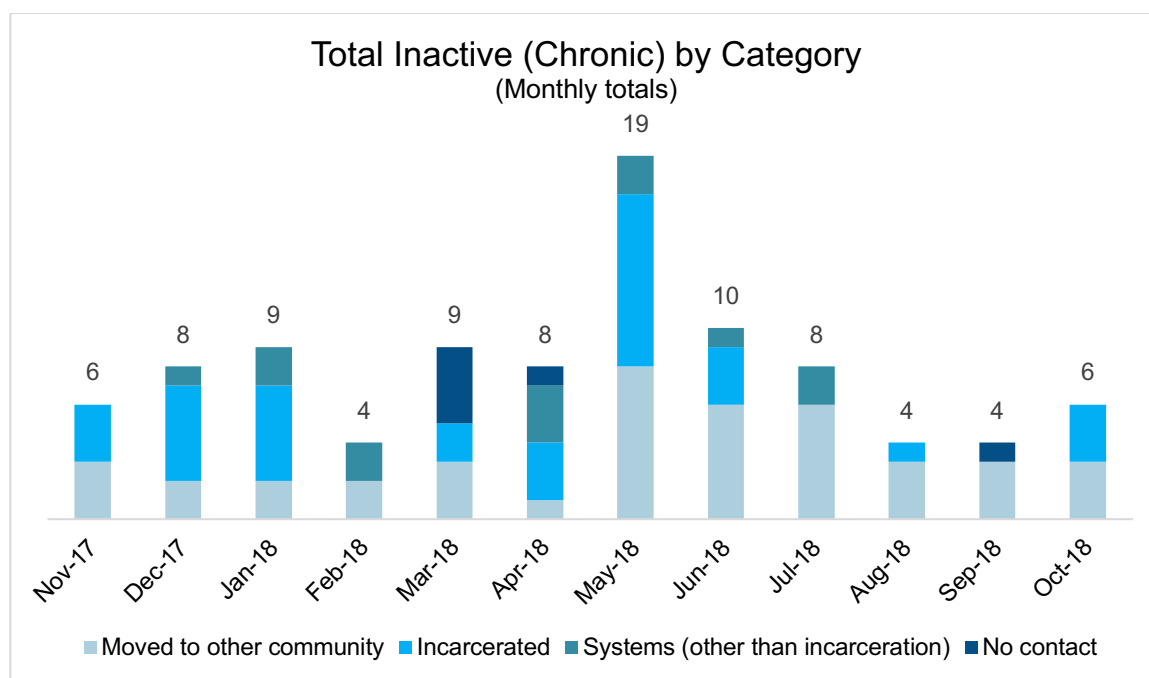


Figure 13: Total inactive by category

CHRONIC INFLOW

Inflow accounts for people experiencing chronic homelessness in Guelph-Wellington entering the homeless system throughout the month. During the reporting period of November 2017 to October 2018, total chronic inflow fluctuated between 11 and 32 individuals. April was an expected outlier month with a significantly higher number of individuals (71) because of the joint Registry

Week / Point-in-Time Count. The median number of individuals accounting for inflow into the system was 25 per month (Figure 14).

Analyzed at the sub-population level, the BNL data demonstrates that the average proportion of total chronic inflow is 57% adults, 29% youth, and 14% family members (Figure 15). The higher number of adults is

not significant, given the larger age category captured by this sub-population.

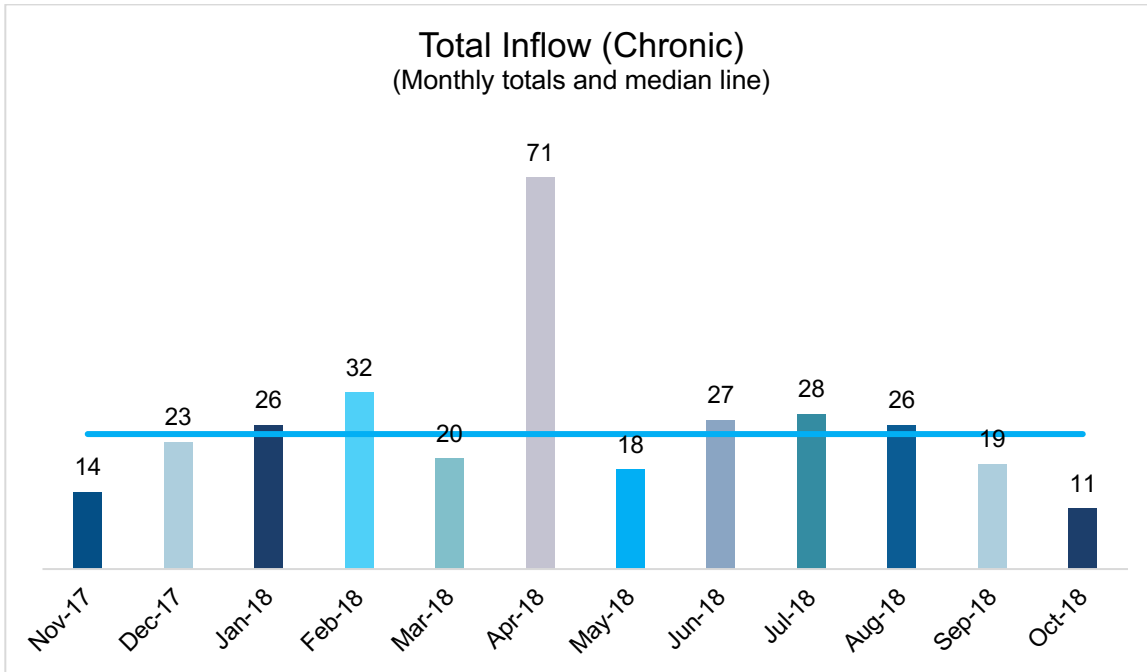


Figure 14: Total inflow (chronic)

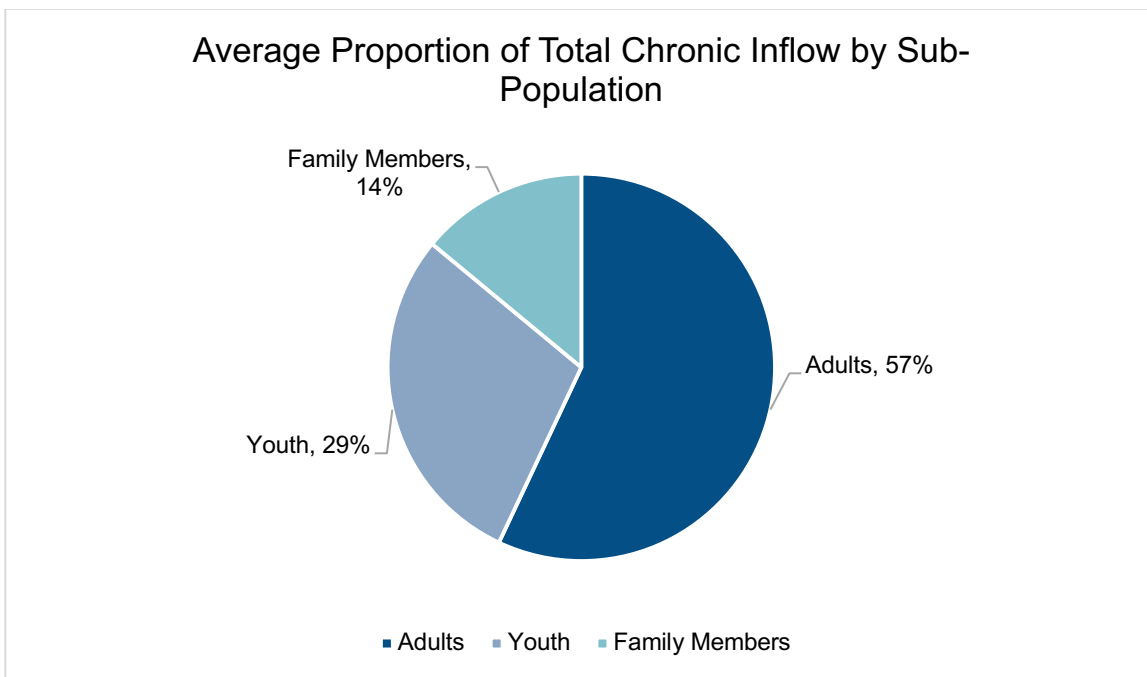


Figure 15: Average proportion of total chronic inflow by sub-population

Total chronic inflow is broken into three separate categories. The first category is newly identified which includes all people who are newly identified (discovered through new assessment, data clean, new info, etc.) and are now actively experiencing chronic homelessness. A sub-category within newly identified are those that “aged in.” This includes individuals who became chronically homeless while on the BNL. For example, if an individual came on the BNL and had experienced homelessness for four months, they would not be captured as newly

identified for chronic homelessness until they were on the BNL for an additional two months. This individual would be captured as ‘newly identified – aged in.’ If an individual didn’t age in, they were experiencing chronic homeless by the date they completed the VI-SPDAT.

Aside from the expected increase in April because of the joint Registry Week / Point-in-Time Count, there does not appear to be any significant trends based on the sub-categories (Figure 16).

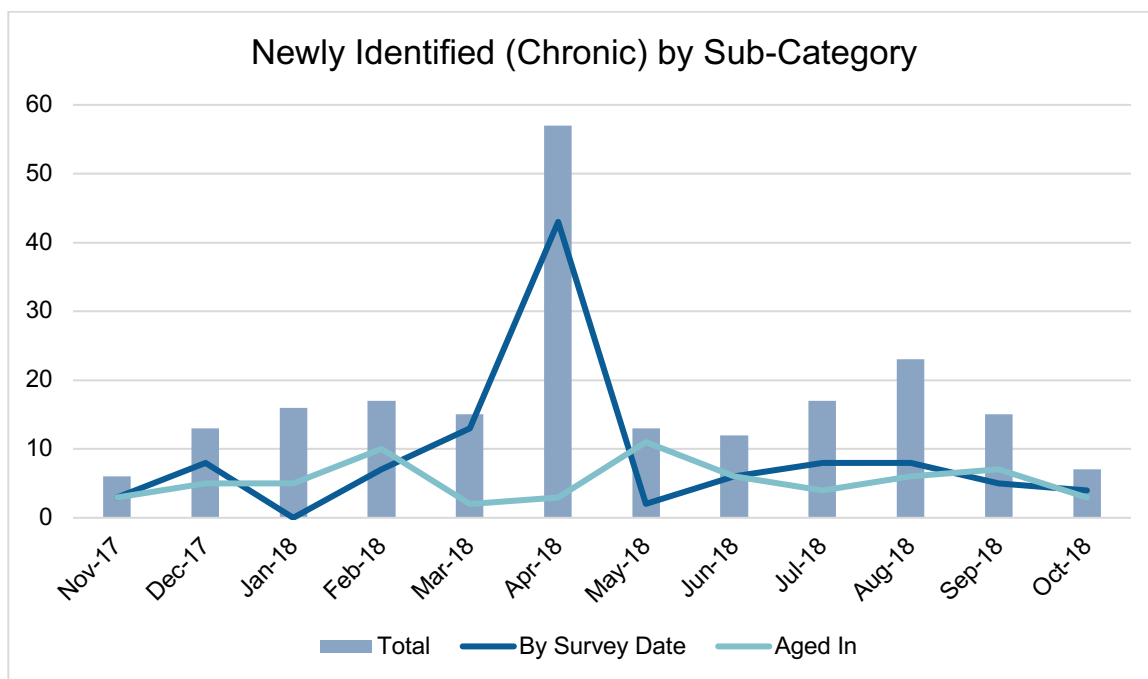


Figure 16: Newly identified chronic homeless by sub-category

The second category under ‘total chronic inflow’ is returned from housing, which includes all people who were previously reported as a move-in (housed), have lost their housing, and returned to active homeless. It is important to note that the BNL does not “reset” the number of months of homelessness experienced, even if an individual is housed. For example, if an individual reported they were homeless for 6 months when they completed the VI-SPDAT, stayed on the BNL as active homeless for

another 2 months, and then was housed for 3 months before returning to active homeless, the individual would be recorded as having experienced 11 months of homelessness. This is likely to change in the future with the implementation of an improved data management software.

The total number of individuals that returned from housing to chronic homelessness fluctuates from 2 per month to 8 per month (see Figure 17).

Further analysis demonstrates that individuals returning to chronic homelessness from housing, maintained their housing for only short periods of time. The average number of months an individual was housed before returning to active homelessness was

3 months. It's important to note that this represents individuals that have returned to active homelessness after a period of housing – it does not represent the average length of time individuals who are moved into housing are able to maintain it.

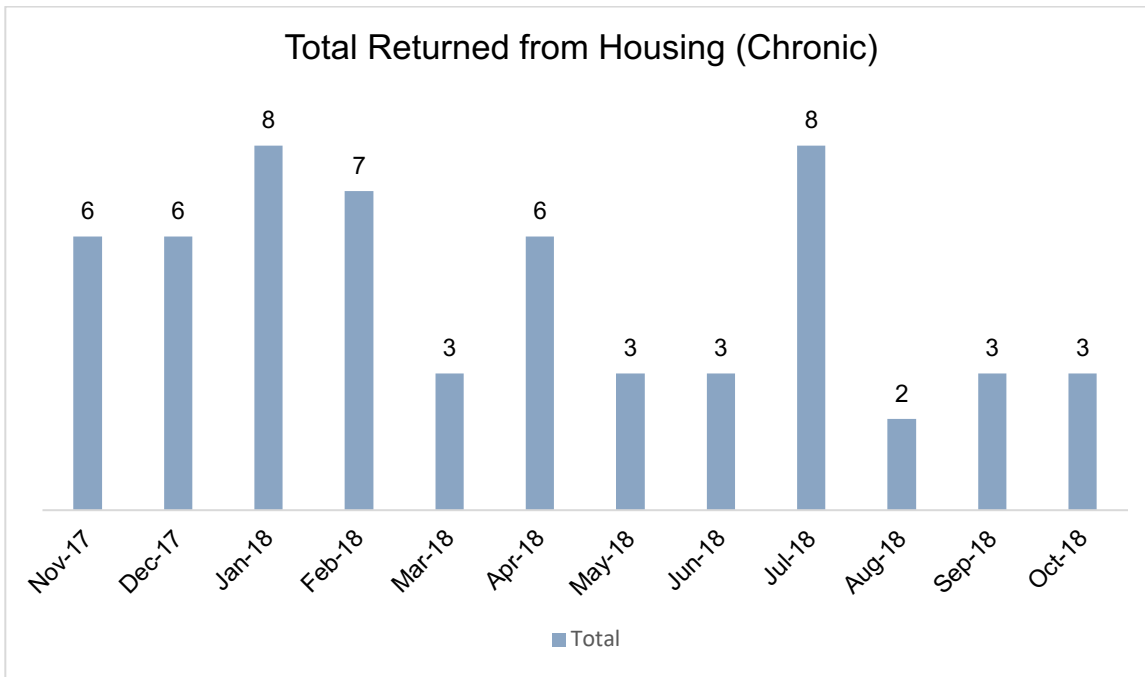


Figure 17: Total newly identified chronic homeless returned from housing

The third category under 'total chronic homelessness' is returned from inactive. This includes all people who were previously reported as inactive that have been reactivated in the system and returned to active homeless. In general, the number of

individuals returning from inactive per month are low, with higher numbers reported in February, April and June (see Figure 18). It's worth noting that no family members returned from inactive. The numbers represent adults and youth only.

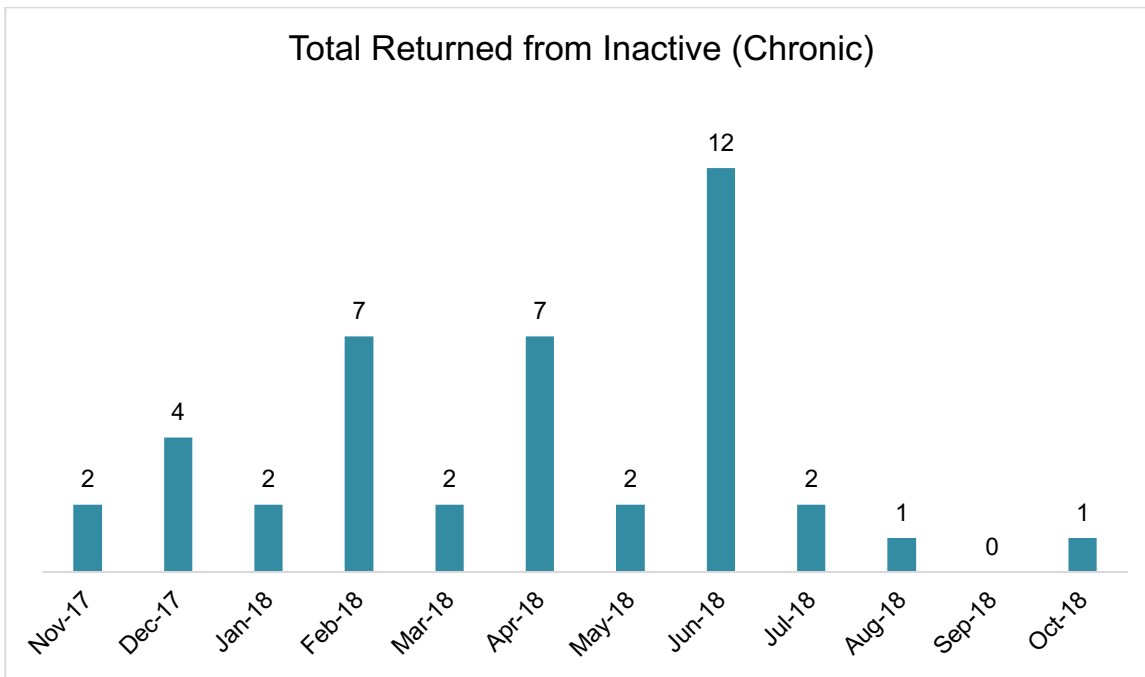


Figure 18: Total newly identified chronic homeless returned from inactive

Based on their status in the month before they were reactivated in the system, the BNL data provides some insights into their situation leading up to their return. When averaged over the reporting period, nearly half (47%) return to homelessness from a period of incarceration, followed by coming back after leaving the community (29%), returning after a stay in a system other than

incarceration (17%), and reactivated after a period of no contact (7%).

Overall, individuals that fall into the category of 'newly identified' generally account for most of total chronic inflow, compared to those returning from housing and returning from inactivity (Figure 19).

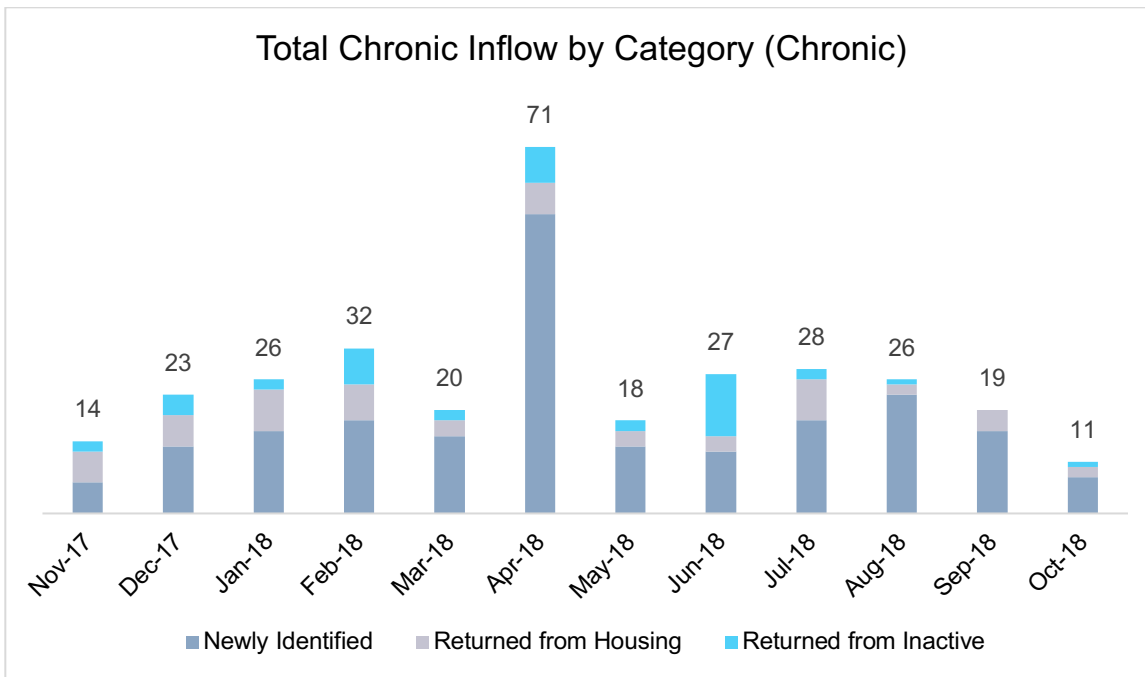


Figure 19: Total inflow into chronic homelessness by category

CONCLUSION

Since joining 20,000 Homes, the Guelph-Wellington homeless-serving system, under the leadership of the County and PTF, has undergone an impactful transformation. Actionable, person-specific data on families and individuals experiencing homelessness is being collected in real-time as part of a comprehensive, community-wide Coordinated Access System. This data, which is detailed in the Guelph-Wellington By-Name List and analyzed in this report, provides insights into the flow in and out of chronic homelessness. This depth of understanding enables community partners to identify opportunities for improvements, as well as challenges that the current system faces.

The reporting period covered in this report highlights some concerns. In general, inflow regularly exceeds outflow, suggesting that chronic homelessness is increasing faster than it is being adequately addressed. This is further reflected in the high number of individuals and family members experiencing chronic homelessness in the latter half of the year.

Guelph-Wellington has demonstrated national leadership in the development and implementation of a Quality BNL and Coordinated Access System. The community is well aligned with government targets and new opportunities, such as *Reaching Home*. Despite some discouraging trends shared in this report, partners continue to charge forward in the spirit of optimism and a belief that a functional end to chronic homelessness is possible.

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