

Point In Time Count 2021

A Survey of People
Experiencing Homelessness
in the City of Peterborough



United Way
Peterborough & District



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Homelessness Strategy

Canada 

The opinions and interpretations
in this publication are those
of the authors and do not
necessarily reflect those of the
Government of Canada.

Land acknowledgement

Before this area was named Peterborough by settlers, this Anishinaabeg territory was known as Nogojiwanong which is Ojibwa for “place at the end of the rapids”. Nearly 100 years ago, settlers of Canada and seven Michi Saagiig (Mississauga) and Chippewa First Nations signed agreements that became known as the Williams Treaties. Peterborough is located on the Treaty 20 Michi Saagiig (Mississauga) territory, which also includes Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Alderville, Scugog Island, Rama, Beausoleil, and Georgina Island First Nations. We respectfully acknowledge that the Williams Treaties First Nations are the stewards and caretakers of these lands and waters in perpetuity, and that they continue to maintain this responsibility to ensure their health and integrity for generations to come.

The Williams Treaties agreements were intended to be the foundation upon which sovereign peoples would build a common relationship but have led to long-standing disputes on crucial issues such as compensation, settlement, and harvesting. We acknowledge the role of colonialism and responsibilities of settlers in these ongoing conflicts have resulted in intergenerational traumas and inequities for Indigenous Peoples.

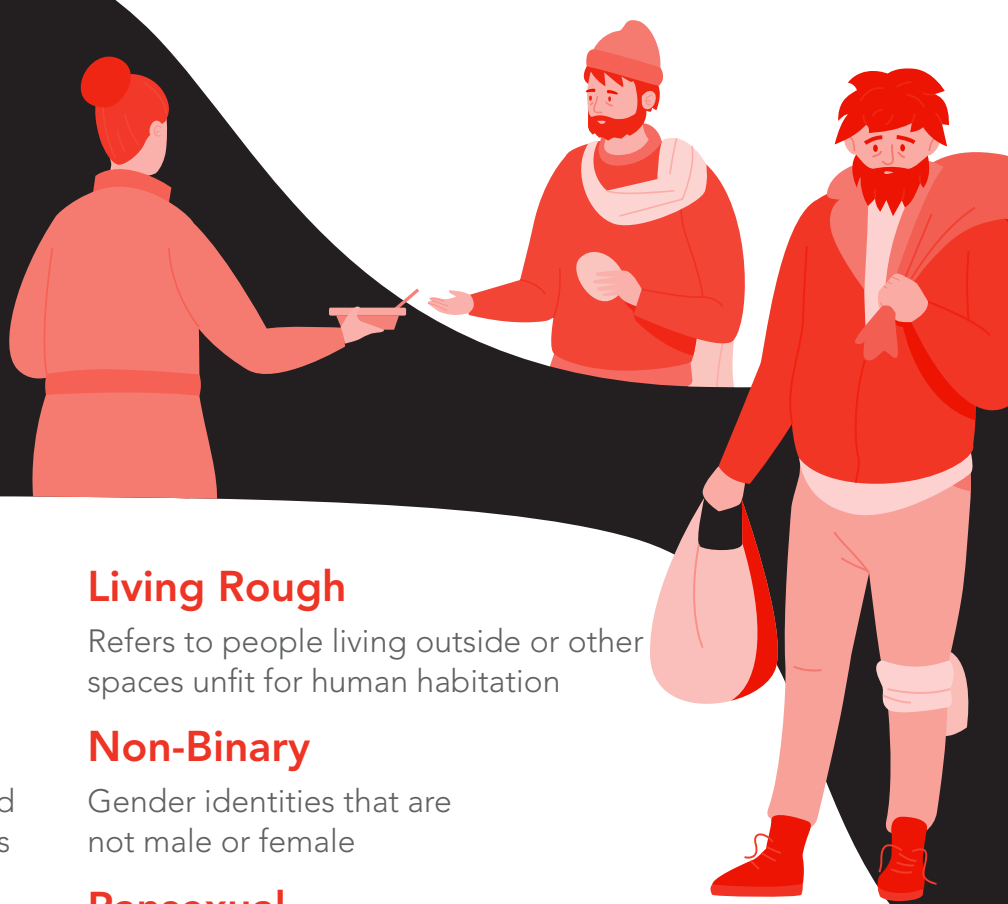
One inequity that Indigenous People face as a consequence of colonialism is housing instability. There is a growing overrepresentation of Indigenous People experiencing homelessness in the City of Peterborough, with about 27% of this year's Point in Time count respondents identifying as Indigenous. May we take a moment to reflect on the fact that the percentage of Indigenous people that are currently experiencing homelessness in Peterborough is almost 10 times higher than the percentage of Indigenous People in Peterborough's total population. As we take action to support people experiencing homelessness in Peterborough, may we learn from local Indigenous people, incorporate cultural sensitivity, and understand housing stability as an act of reconciliation.

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Helpful Definitions



Absolute Homelessness

Refers to people who are either unsheltered or emergency sheltered

Acuity

The level of support and care required based on severity of health conditions

Asexual

Sexual orientation referring to experiencing little to no sexual attraction to others

Bisexual

Sexual orientation referring to attraction to more than one gender

Chronic Homelessness

Refers to 6+ months of homelessness within the last year

Cis-Gendered

People who identify their gender as the sex that they were biologically assigned at birth

Concurrent Disorder

Having both a mental health concern and a substance use concern

Emergency Sheltered

People living in emergency overnight shelters for people without housing; violence against women shelters

Living Rough

Refers to people living outside or other spaces unfit for human habitation

Non-Binary

Gender identities that are not male or female

Pansexual

Sexual orientation referring to attraction to people regardless of their gender

Provisionally Accommodated

People who are temporarily staying with other without a permanent place of their own; people staying in provincial institutions like hospital or jail without out permanent housing to return to; in transitional or interim housing where their stay is limited to a set number of months

Tri-Morbidity

Having a physical health, mental health, and substance use concerns

Two-Spirit

Term used among Indigenous communities to reflect one's sexual, gender, and spiritual identity; someone who embodies both masculine and feminine spirits

Unsheltered

People living outdoors in public or private areas without permission or agreement; people living in structures not meant for human habitation

Introduction

When I first came to Peterborough in 2011, I asked the then Manager of Social Services how many homeless people are in Peterborough. They said, “we don’t know.” The number of persons who stayed in shelter was known, but not the total of those sleeping rough, couch surfing, living out of cars, to say nothing of those on the verge of eviction. I then asked why we can’t stand up and say we are going to end homelessness in our community, and the answer, as one might expect was, “we don’t know” how many homeless people there are currently.

The old analogy of babies, and rivers, and waterfalls, certainly comes to mind when thinking about homelessness in any community. Stemming the flow of people into homelessness can’t begin at a shelter door. Emergency shelters aren’t homes. It must begin with a why, and a how, and a who, then very quickly pivot to strategies that work upstream- to stretch the metaphor- and prevent the awfully expensive, the very harrowing reality of being homeless. The expense falling to a community, the cruelty of homelessness falling on individuals.

In Peterborough, Social Services together with community partners have collaborated on a strategy of ‘Built for Zero’, a campaign centred around a response to homelessness that is strategic, uniform and evidence based. The goal of ending homelessness by 2025 was presented to Council in 2018. Part of that

undertaking has been the development of consistent intake and assessment tools, and a prioritizing of people on the ‘By Name List’. While the efforts of this community to conform to the model of prioritizing those that are most in need is commendable, that effort is frustrated by the reality of a marketplace based system that pushes affordability of housing and rental stock to the side. The result is that individuals are spending more time on average homeless and that shelters are operating near full capacity more frequently than previously. Once again, I will remind, shelters are not homes, or any kind of a permanent solution.

Our Federal Government in 2018 through the National Housing Strategy Act recognized housing as a human right. Moreover, committed future governments to the progressive realization of the Right to Housing. This is a reason to be hopeful, because it obliges a focus on both the immediate needs of those who are homeless as well as a review and reflection on the structural issues that lead to homelessness. It is a holistic aspirational approach that stays current with emerging trends and challenges. To adapt to and adopt a rights-based approach to homelessness certainly inspires us at the United Way, and hopefully those serving anyone who is experiencing homelessness. To put all of this more simply, it is wrong that in a country as well off as Canada that anyone should experience homelessness at all. Perhaps, not even too strong to say it’s immoral.

The biannual Point-in-Time Count augments a Coordinated Access approach that works by capturing a snapshot on a given date of those experiencing homelessness. The last report was done in 2018. Since then, there has been a global pandemic, crushing inflation, an increase in a poisoned drug supply, and a waning in affordable housing and rental markets.

This 2021 Point-in-Time Count was conducted under challenging conditions and our gratitude goes out to many. First, Kerri Kightley was the research coordinator and primary author of this report. Her leadership in the community is well known and she moves in the world with intelligence and aplomb. The City of Peterborough's Social Services department, and community advocates who tirelessly face

this issue daily were essential in conducting the survey. The various shelters and outreach programs who opened doors and facilitated the survey process. The Data Queen Erin Forrest, who drives information and refines the By Name List with an enthusiasm that is infectious. Dorothy Olver, who's leadership on homelessness within Social Services and the community is invaluable. My colleague at United Way Betsy Farrar who was un-singed in this trial by fire and embraced all, with humour and grace. Finally, most importantly, and ultimately, a humble thank you to all of the people who had the willingness and courage to take part in this survey, to share their stories, their stories really of remarkable resilience, the stories that remind us with privilege how we shouldn't take for granted the gift of safe housing.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Russell".

Jim Russell

B.A.A.S.W., M.S.W.

CEO, United Way
Peterborough & District

**Numbers matter
because people matter.**

**These are our numbers,
and these are our people.**

**This is a snapshot of homelessness
in our community, a picture that
needs to be changed.**

Overview of Point-in-Time

On December 9th, 2021, the United Way of Peterborough and District, with many community homelessness partners and advocates participated in the third nationally-coordinated Point-in-Time Count. Funding for the count was provided through a grant from the Government of Canada's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. The count was centred in the City of Peterborough and was limited to a 24-hour period.

What is a Point-in-Time Count?

A Point-In-Time (PiT) Count is a small picture of who is experiencing homelessness in a community and what the contributing factors to their homelessness might be. The PiT is intended to collect numerical and basic demographic information about individuals and families experiencing homelessness in that moment in time.

There are two central purposes for conducting a Point-In-Time Count:

An enumeration, or count, of people experiencing absolute homelessness

It is intended to identify how many people in a community experience homelessness in shelters and outdoors at a given time. Conducted over subsequent years, PiT Counts can be used by the community to track progress in reducing homelessness.

A survey of people experiencing homelessness

Through an accompanying survey, the PiT Count gives the community information on the demographics and service needs of people affected by homelessness. This information can be used to target community resources to where they are most needed. ¹



How are PiT Counts developed & nationally coordinated?

Provincial and federal governments establish standardized metrics that all communities must include in their surveys. Communities may also add questions that are specific to their own needs, but not required by the government. Once local communities have completed their surveys, standardized reports are submitted to the government for broader analysis. This process allows all levels of government to understand trends locally, regionally, provincially, and nationally to better inform funding and policy decisions.

Locally, community stakeholders and people with lived experience were consulted during the development of the survey tool (available online). Three questions were added to the government-mandated survey tool, allowing deeper research into issues specific to Peterborough.

How was the survey conducted?

Over 50 trained staff and volunteers from Social Services and other local outreach agencies administered the surveys. Between 10:00AM on December 9th, 2021 and 6:00AM on December 10th, 2021, outreach teams traveled pre-determined routes known to be frequented by people experiencing homelessness. People were screened for survey eligibility and consent before verbally completing the survey with an outreach team. In addition to seeking people outside, outreach teams were deployed to all shelter locations and some community food programs to administer surveys to folks accessing those services. Survey participants were provided \$10 cash for participating and offered snacks, drinks, mitts, socks, and resource pamphlets.

Are Point-in-Time Count results an exact reflection of homelessness locally?

While a PiT Count is the best available methodology to collect a snapshot of those experiencing homelessness, there are some limitations, including:

A PiT Count typically occurs over a 24-hour period and surveyors can only meet with individuals and families who can be found during that period.

Hidden homelessness is complex. A PiT Count often misses individuals who are couch-surfing, staying with friends or family temporarily, or living in a motel room.

Enumerating individuals and families who are living outdoors, whether in their vehicle, a tent, makeshift shelter or in other ways hidden is difficult. People experiencing outdoor homelessness are often pushed to the margins and remain hidden and out of sight. PiT Counts rely on the knowledge of volunteers and the relationships that they have with people living outdoors to locate and engage in survey initiatives like the PiT.

See 'Limitations' for full description of the survey limitations.

Who is surveyed as part of the Point-in-Time Count?

Individuals and families who were counted as part of the PiT Count included those who were staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing, outdoors in tents, makeshift shelters or in other public areas and those who identified as without housing in community meal programs and drop-in service locations.



The results from the PiT Count should therefore be considered as the minimum number of individuals and families who were homeless in Peterborough on December 9th, 2021.

Homelessness System

The term 'homelessness system' refers to the interconnected network of support services, big picture strategies, physical structures, intangible solutions, community understandings and collective goals that drive our local response to homelessness. Peterborough's homelessness system is comprised of several key players, including the people who are in need of support, the agencies who provide housing and support services, and Social Services at the City of Peterborough. Within the homelessness system are several methodologies, practices, and coalitions; some are rooted in government policies and funding, while others form organically between service providers in response to the needs of the people they serve. Coordinated Access is an example of a nation-wide methodology used by government and service providers. The By-Name Priority List is one tool within the Coordinated Access toolbox, and it is managed by Social Services.

On December 9th, 2021...

176

People
experiencing
homelessness
participated
in the survey

Point-in-Time Count

Snapshot of local homelessness within a specific time period (24 hours)

Highlights local trends based on characteristics commonly reported on by survey participants

Standardized data that can be compared nationally

288

People
experiencing
homelessness
were on the
By-Name
Priority List

By-Name Priority List

Updated on an ongoing basis

Collects in-depth personal information about the unique housing and homelessness experiences of individuals

Matches specific people to specific housing resources based on priority of need

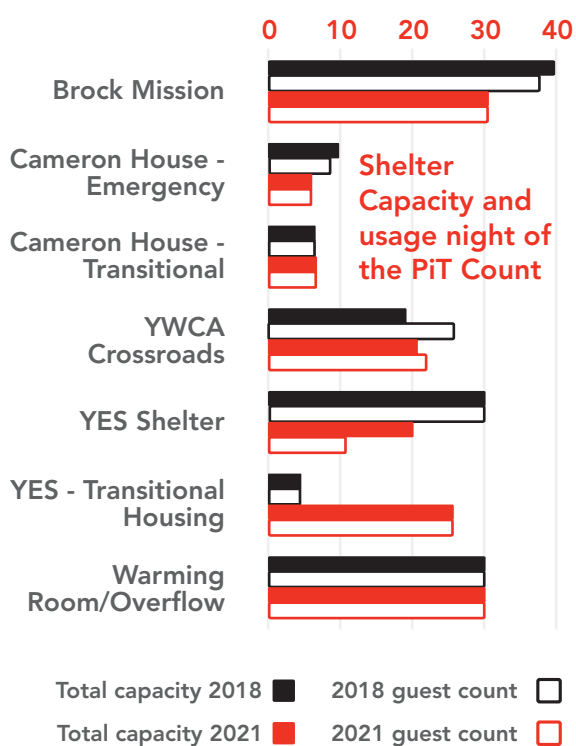


Both the PiT Count and By-Name Priority List inform planning, investments, and strategies to end homelessness

Migration to Peterborough

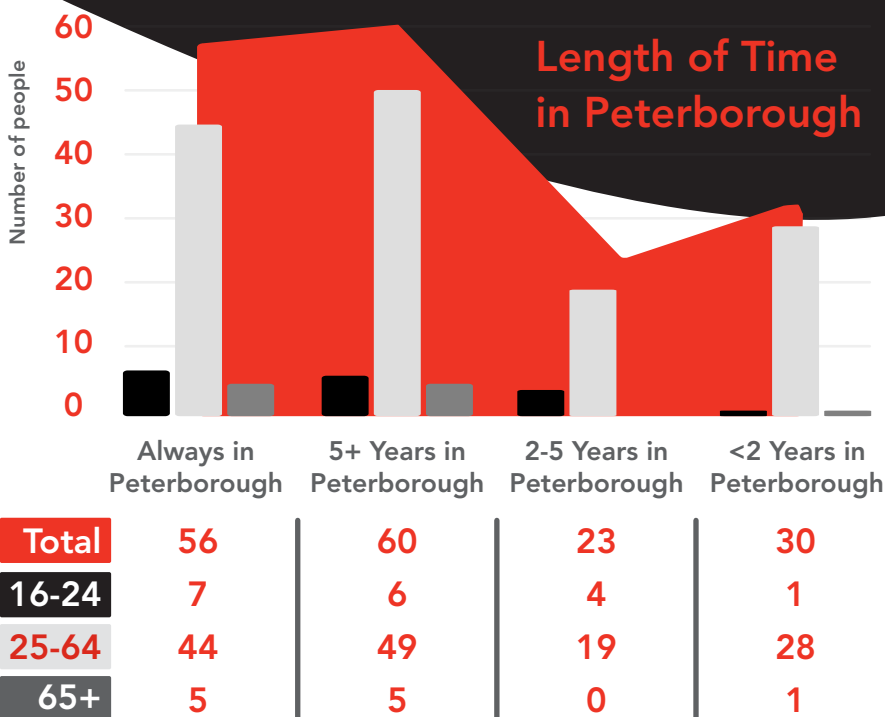
Most people surveyed were born in Canada. Only 4 people, or 2% of respondents reported having come to Canada as an immigrant or refugee. This is lower than the percentage of people (8%) who report immigrating to Canada in the whole population of Peterborough.²

There is often a misconception that people move to Peterborough to access shelter and other social services, but data continues to show differently. Only 10% of survey respondents have been in Peterborough for less than a year, a significant decrease from 20% of people reporting the same in 2018.



Common Misconceptions

Differing levels of awareness and understanding about social issues can result in consequences such as stigmatization, discrimination, misinformed decision making, and lack of resource allocation. Here are two common examples of misconceptions about homelessness in Peterborough.



Shelter Usage

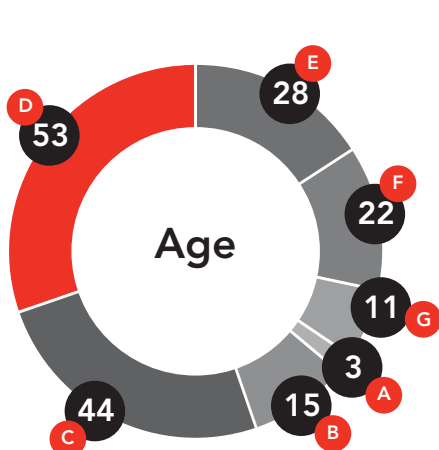
Capacity in shelter programs has changed since 2018 due to physical distancing requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and some changes to sheltering programs in 2021.

604 unique individuals accessed the shelter system at least once during 2021.³

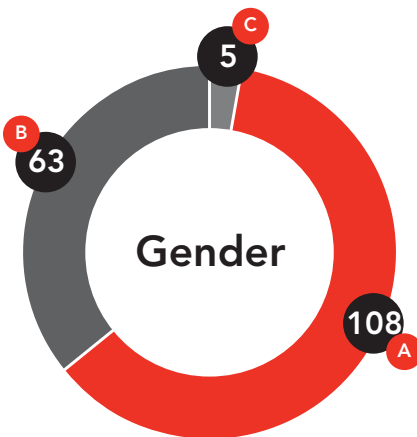
What we heard

Shelters are often full and when beds become available, it is often not known until late in the evening forcing people to wait outside of a shelter or set up camp elsewhere. Living outside is difficult in Peterborough because people are asked to move along regularly. Camping gear and belongings are thrown out and campsites are cleared, forcing people to start over at least once per week, sometimes more. This prevents people from establishing any kind of stability that would allow regular connections to supports and services.

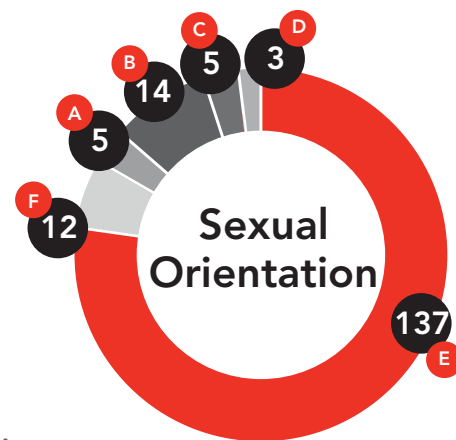
Demographics



A 16-18 E 45-54
B 18-24 F 55-64
C 25-34 G 65+
D 35-44



A Cis-Gender Man
B Cis-Gender Woman
C Non-Binary or Declined to answer



A Asexual E Heterosexual
B Bisexual F Questioning, Don't know, Declined to answer
C Pansexual
D Gay or Lesbian

6%

of participants who identified as men also identified as asexual, bisexual, or gay

27%

of participants who identified as women also identified as asexual, bisexual, or gay

Household type

9%

reported staying with a partner or spouse

5%

reported staying with another adult, such as a friend or family member

4%

reported having dependent children with them, representing 7 single parent-led families with a cumulative total of 14 children



History of Family and Housing Instability during Childhood

There are strong links between homelessness and a history of involvement with the Child Welfare System and/or changes in family structure during childhood. In comparison, in Canada, only 0.3% of the general population has had involvement with the child welfare system⁴, while 43% of people surveyed reported involvement with the Child Welfare System whether that be the Children's Aid Society (CAS), foster care or a youth group home or had to live with another family member for a period of time through kinship care.

Veteran Status

3% of survey respondents report a history with the Canadian Military and are considered 'Veterans'.

Income sources

Survey participants were read a list of possible income sources and were asked to identify all that applied to them. 96% of respondents reported having at least one income source.

59%
Social Assistance

28%
Disability Benefit

3%
Employment Income

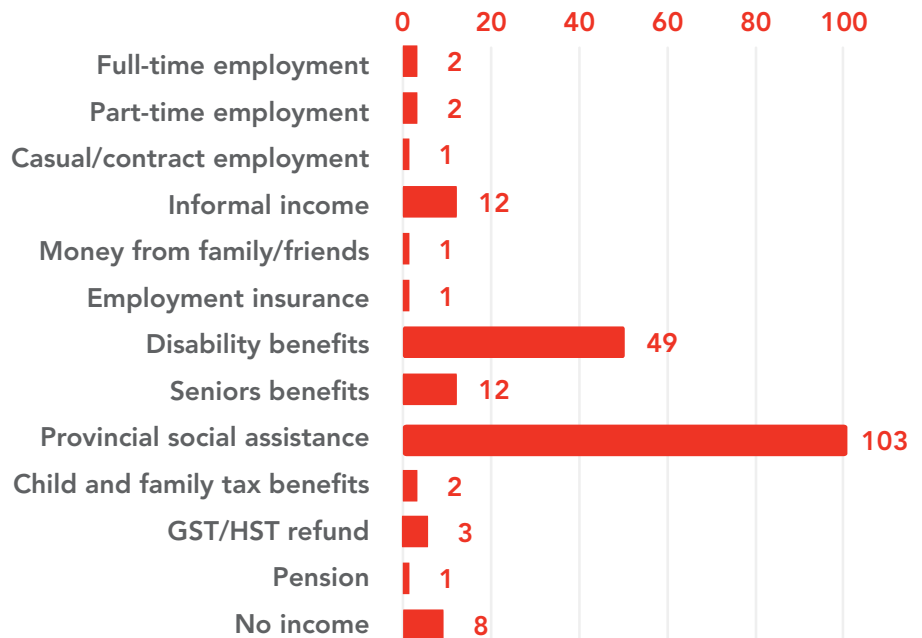
Only 3% of people reported receiving the Child and Family Tax Benefit or the GST/HST Refund which may suggest that most respondents have not submitted a tax return. Comparatively, survey participants were asked if they completed their tax return in 2020 and only 36% replied 'YES' suggesting that address and banking or direct deposit arrangements may be difficult for those experiencing homelessness.

\$1,169/month

Ontario Disability Support Program⁵

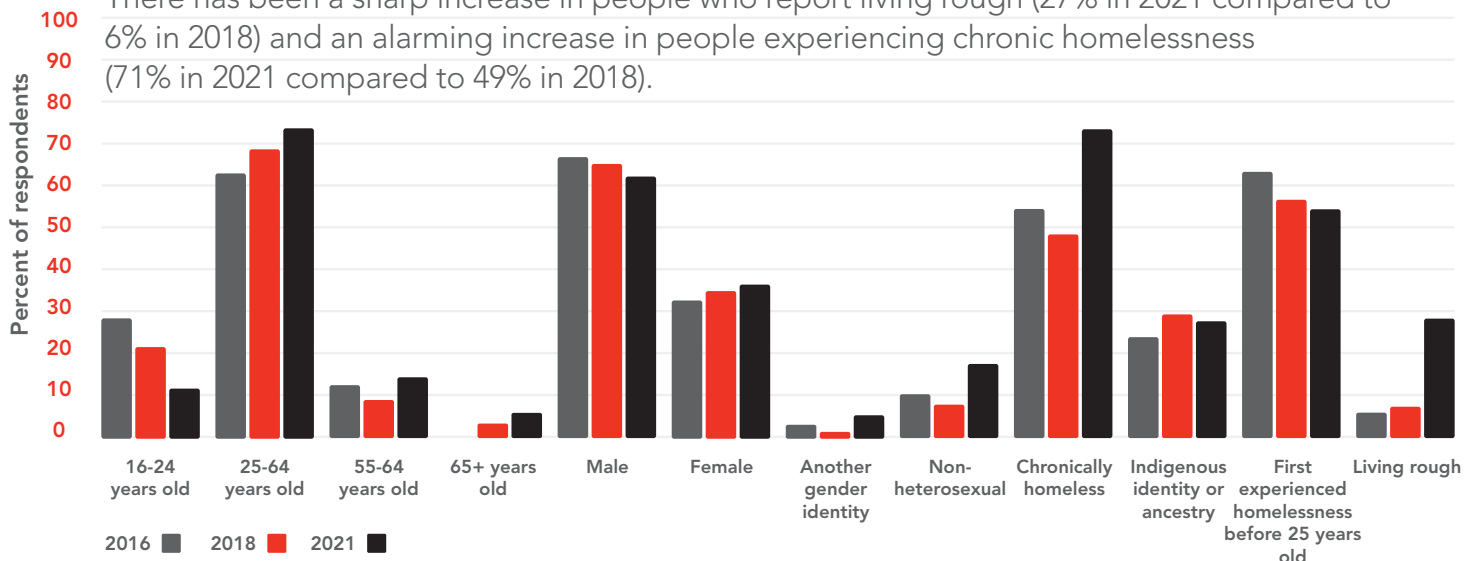
\$733/month

Ontario Works⁶

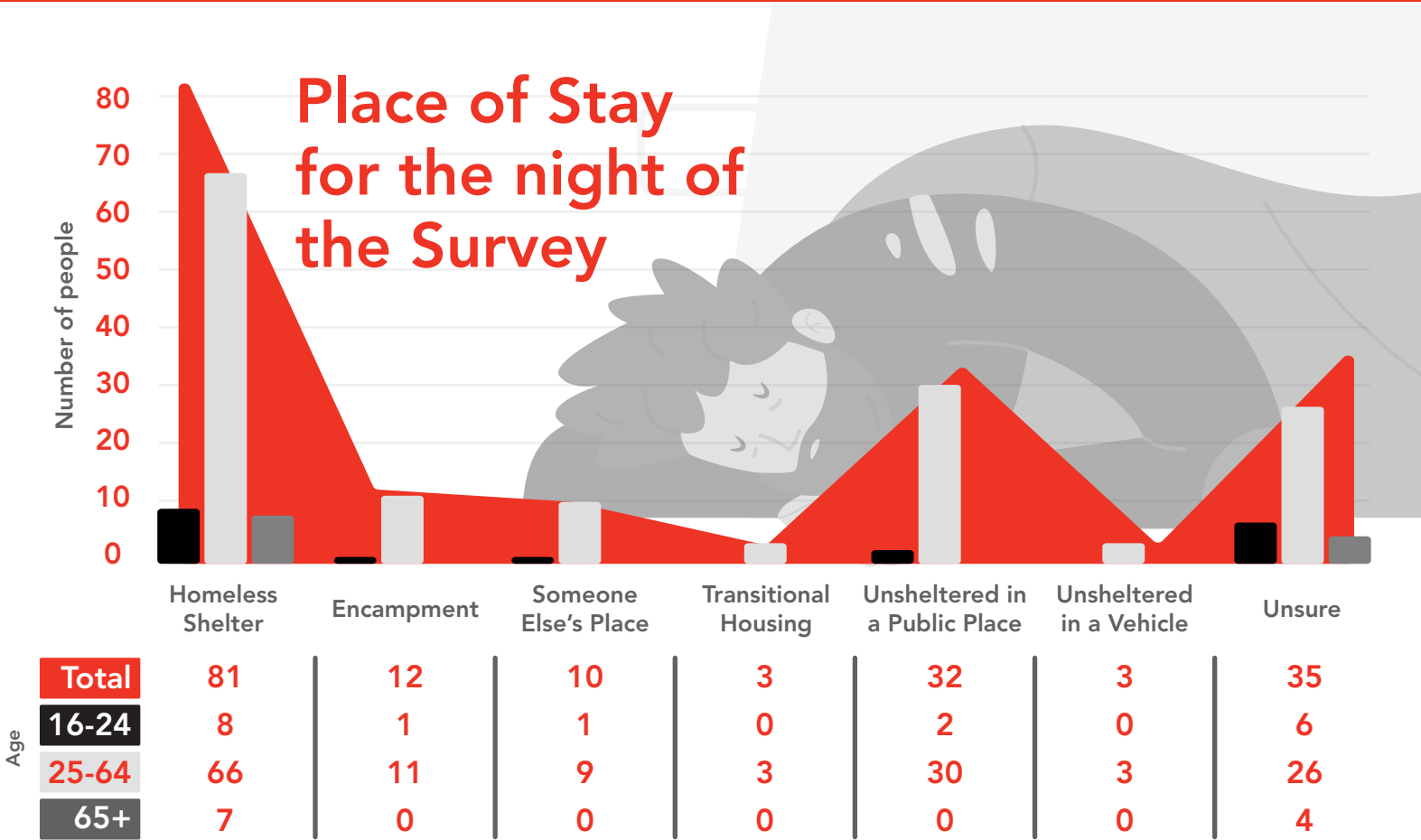


Changes over time

In Peterborough, there is much conversation about homelessness and whether the state of homelessness is "getting worse" over time. According to the data collected in the 2021 PiT Count, the depth and complexity of need in Peterborough's homeless population is increasing. There has been a sharp increase in people who report living rough (27% in 2021 compared to 6% in 2018) and an alarming increase in people experiencing chronic homelessness (71% in 2021 compared to 49% in 2018).



Experiences of Homelessness



Reason for housing loss

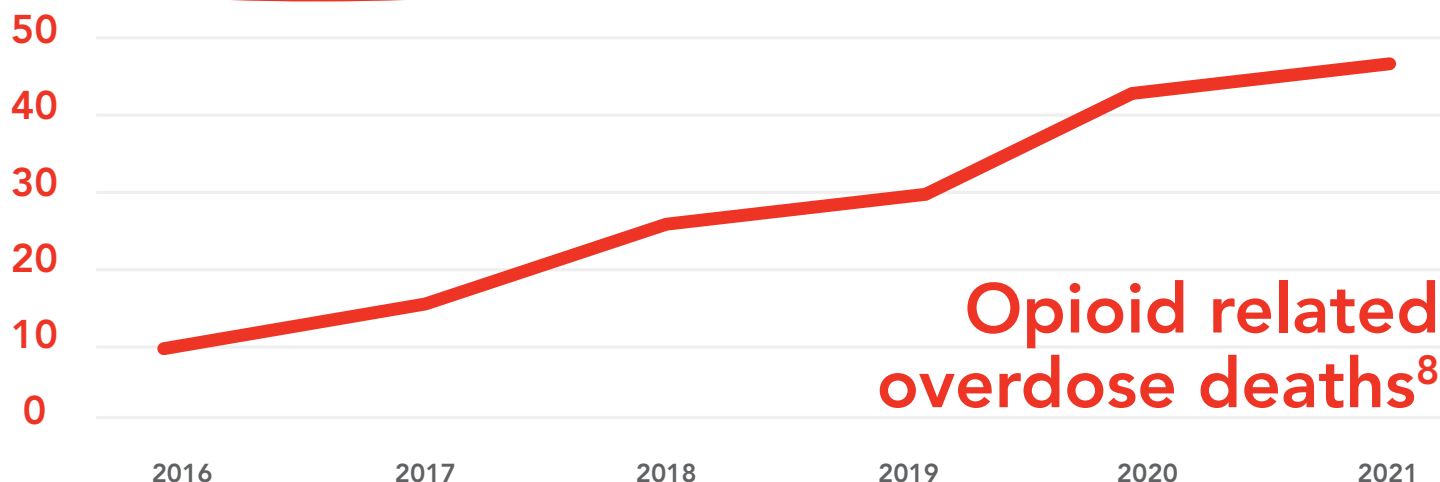
could select more than one answer



- | | | | | | |
|----|--|----|--------------------------------------|----|--|
| 32 | Not enough income for housing (e.g., loss of benefit, income or job) | 29 | Conflict with spouse/partner | 2 | Experienced discrimination |
| 19 | Unfit/unsafe housing condition | 9 | Conflict with parent/guardian | 6 | Physical health issue |
| 4 | Building sold or renovated | 19 | Conflict with other | 11 | Mental health issue |
| 1 | Owner moved in | 15 | Experienced abuse by spouse/partner | 34 | Substance abuse issue |
| 21 | Landlord/tenant conflict | 2 | Experienced abuse by parent/guardian | 3 | Hospitalization or a treatment program |
| 4 | Complaint (e.g., pets/noise/damage) | 1 | Experienced abuse by other | 16 | Incarceration (jail or prison) |
| 1 | Left the community/relocated | 3 | Departure of family member | 18 | Other reason for homelessness |

Opioid Crisis and Homelessness

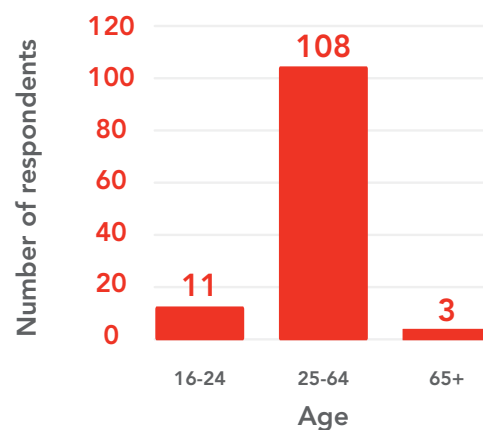
In Peterborough, there has been a sharp increase in opioid related overdose death in the last 6 years⁷.



69% of all participants reported being affected by the poisoned drug supply either themselves or a loved one.



Number of participants impacted by poisoned drug supply by age



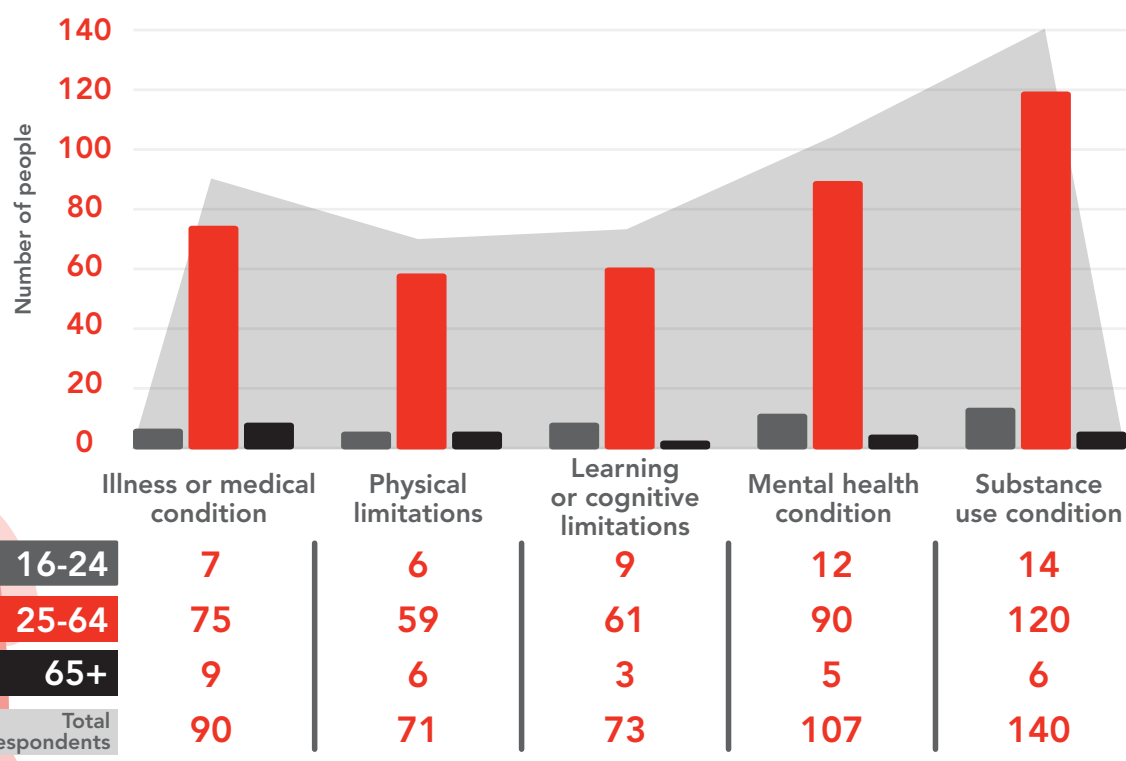
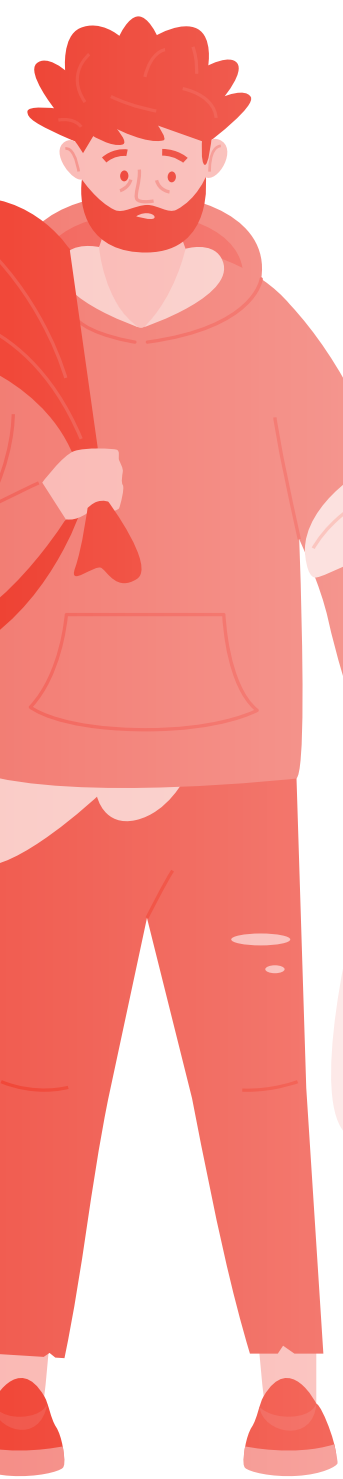
61%
of youth
respondents

73%
of adult
respondents

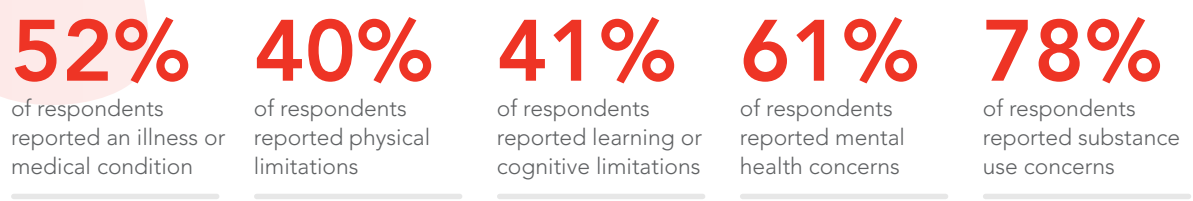
27%
of older adult
respondents

reported being impacted
by the poisoned drug supply

Health Conditions

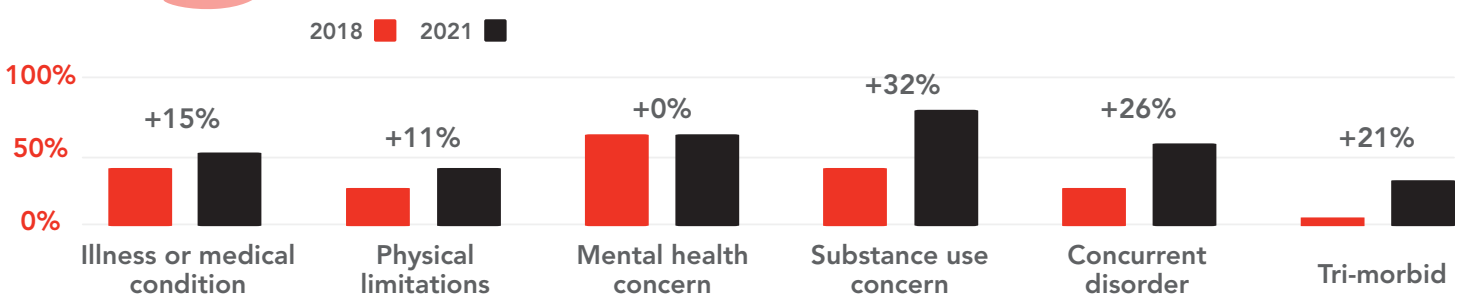


Health of people experiencing homelessness is a deep concern in Peterborough. It is widely accepted that people experiencing homelessness are at higher risk than their housed peers of developing chronic physical and mental health conditions. Anecdotally, people experiencing homelessness report difficult interactions with the formal health system and hesitation to access services at hospitals and clinics.



Increase in Acuity Since 2018

Survey participants reported experiencing illness, physical limitations, medical conditions, and substance use concerns at higher rates than in 2018.



Co-Occurring Health Conditions

The complexity of multiple co-occurring conditions while also experiencing homelessness increases risk factors for people. Outdoor homelessness or 'living rough' often exacerbates these issues. Homeless individuals are faced with many challenges to address their health conditions while simultaneously seeking shelter. Homeless individuals who experience chronic physical health, mental health and substance use conditions are at an estimated 2-5 times higher risk of premature death⁹. This group also experiences 4 times more unplanned admissions to hospital than their unhoused peers¹⁰ and are often in need of more intensive stabilization and permanent supportive housing to resolve homelessness.

Many people experiencing homelessness also experience multiple, co-occurring conditions including:

36%

of participants reported both an illness or medical condition and a mental health condition

31%

of participants reported both an illness or medical condition and a physical limitation

33%

of participants reported conditions in all three categories: mental health and physical health and substance use (tri-morbidity)

27%

of participants reported both an illness or medical condition and a learning or cognitive limitation

55%

of participants reported both a mental health and a substance use condition (concurrent disorder)



71%

of all respondents reported experiencing chronic homelessness within the last year

44%

of all respondents were homeless for all 12 months within the last year

27%

of all respondents were homeless for 6-11 months within the last year

Chronic Homelessness

Chronic homelessness is defined by the Government of Canada as people who have a total of 6 months or more homeless (180 days) in the past year.¹¹ In Peterborough 71% of people surveyed meet the definition of chronic homelessness compared to 49% of people in 2018. Of those experiencing chronic homelessness, they were homeless for an average of 325 days in the past year.

For every 2 people experiencing chronic homelessness that are staying in shelter, there are 3 people experiencing chronic homeless sleeping unsheltered

56 of 94 (60%) people who were sleeping in shelter on the night of December 9th, 2021 reported chronic homelessness compared to 42 of 47 (89%) people who were sleeping unsheltered that night.



More people are staying homeless longer.

350%

increase in number of people sleeping outdoors

Homelessness of any duration threatens the physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing of individuals experiencing it. People who spend the equivalent of 6 or more months homeless within one year are faced with different challenges than those who have not met the chronically homeless threshold. Understanding who is most often entering chronic homelessness and the impacts of chronic homelessness on one's health is a key aspect of preventing people experiencing homelessness for over 6 months.

45%

increase in chronic homelessness

These sharp increases suggest that more intensive and specific interventions need to be planned for those experiencing homelessness to not only prevent premature death, but to decrease the likelihood of unplanned hospital visits and increase the likelihood of finding permanent resolutions to homelessness.

Sleeping outdoors in 2018: 6% Chronic homelessness in 2018: 49%
Sleeping outdoors in 2021: 27% Chronic homelessness in 2021: 71%

Living Rough

The number of people who report 'living rough' whether outdoors in public areas, in a vehicle or in an encampment increased dramatically in 2021. This population experiences homelessness differently than those who stay in emergency shelters. They are homeless longer, experience homelessness at a younger age and are less likely to access emergency shelter.



Approximately **1 in 5** survey participants didn't know where they were going to sleep that night

35 of 176 respondents



Of the folks who knew where they were going to sleep at the time of survey, **1 in 3** were going to be sleeping unsheltered

47 of 176 respondents



Of people living rough, we learned they:

Are experiencing longer periods of homelessness

People living rough reported an average of 286 days homeless in the last year versus an average of 221 days homeless in the sheltered population. In addition, people living rough are 29% more likely to be experiencing chronic homelessness.

Are less likely to stay in shelters at any time

It is commonly understood that people experiencing outdoor homelessness often cycle in and out of shelter depending on the season, health, and context of the shelter environment. Less than half (47%) of unsheltered people report spending time in an emergency shelter in the last 12 months.

Are more likely to have Indigenous Ancestry

30% of people living unsheltered report Indigenous ancestry compared to 21% of the sheltered population. Unsheltered Indigenous people report an average of 321 days homeless in the last year and 83% reported being chronically homeless. In addition, 43% of unsheltered Indigenous people reported experiencing co-occurring physical illness, mental health and substance use concerns.

65

more days homeless in the past year on average

14%

increase in reported impacts by poisoned drug supply

Lower rates of illnesses, medical conditions, and tri-morbidity than the sheltered population

Indigenous People

In Peterborough, people identifying as Indigenous or with Indigenous ancestry have different experiences of homelessness than their non-Indigenous peers. Indigenous people who participated in the 2021 PiT Count are on average 40 years of age and first experienced homelessness at 22 years old.

Indigenous People are over-represented in the population of people experiencing homelessness.

Over one quarter (27% or 48 people) of survey participants identified as having an Indigenous identity or ancestry. By comparison, people with Indigenous identities account for 4% of the population of the City of Peterborough¹². The over-representation of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness is consistent with communities across Canada. In the 2018 coordinated PiT count, 30% of participants nationally identified as Indigenous¹³.

27%

of respondents identified as Indigenous

4%

of Peterborough's population identifies as Indigenous

What we heard

Shelter and Outreach workers who interact with Indigenous people experiencing homelessness report that shelter and housing supports that intentionally embed an Indigenous world view into their design and programming make sense. Outreach workers reported Indigenous people living rough wanting access to traditional medicine and practices and find that providing this access more often builds bridges to housing and social supports.

On average, Indigenous people spent 48 more days homeless in 2021 than non-Indigenous people

Indigenous respondents reported higher levels of health concerns than non-Indigenous respondents.

30%

reported living rough

175 days

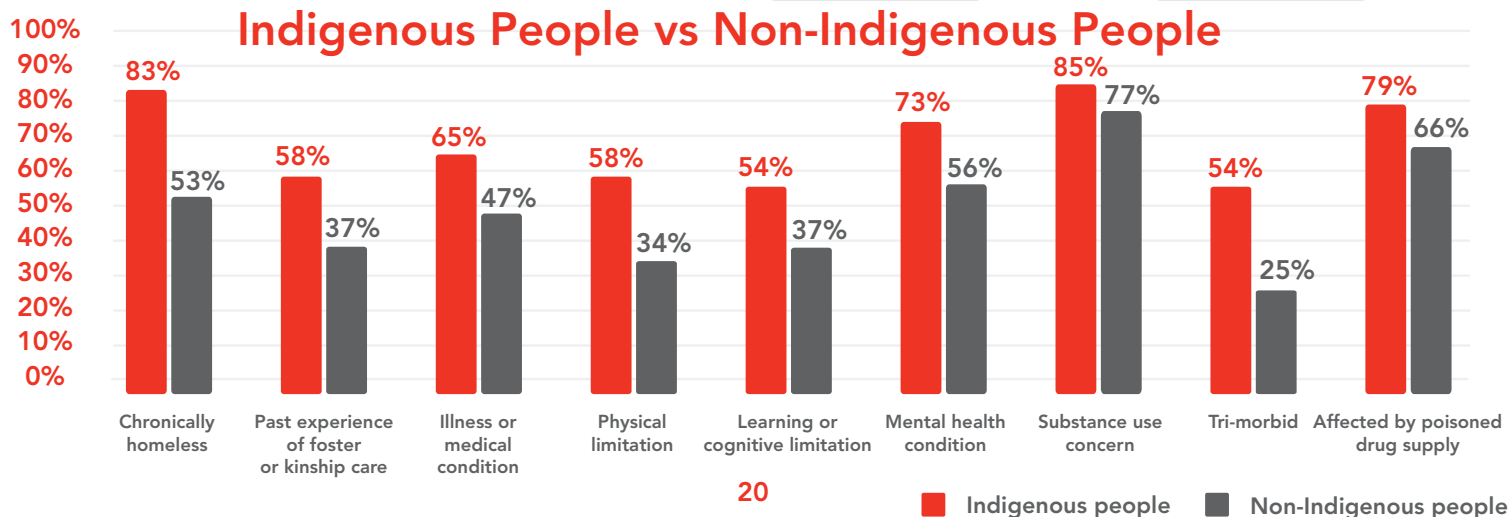
of sleeping outdoors in the last year on average

29%

reported not staying in emergency shelter in 2021

29%

reported being unsure of where they were going to stay that night



Older Adults 65+

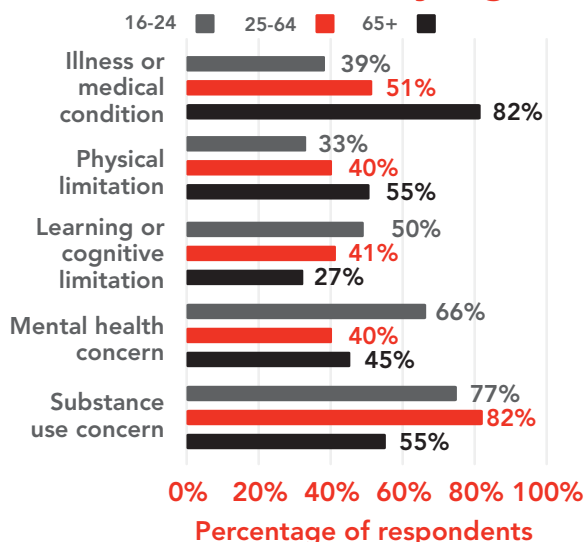
11 survey respondents indicated that they are 65 years or older. The health needs of older adults differs than those of adults and youth, as well as the reasons why they lost their housing.

The cohort of older adult respondents have overall been in Peterborough for longer than the adult and youth cohorts. 91% of older adult respondents (all but one) indicated that they have been in Peterborough for at least 5 years or their entire lives, compared to 62% of adults and 74% of youth.

91% of older adult respondents reported chronic homelessness, compared to 71% of adult respondents and 61% of youth respondents

More than half of older adults reported experiencing physical limitations. 9 of 11 reported having a medical condition

Health Conditions by Age



The main reasons why older adults are losing their housing are different than people 64 and under.

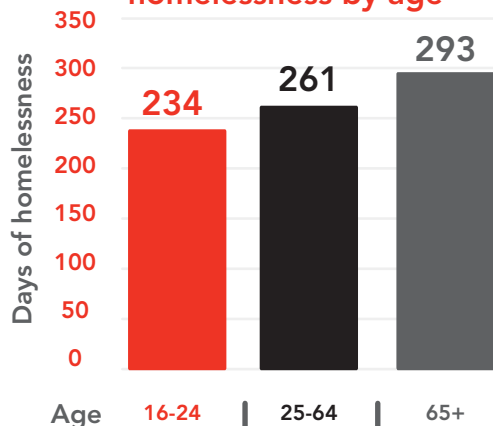
Older adults reported **8 reasons** for housing loss:

- 4 Not enough income
- 2 Complaint (such as noise, pet, etc.)
- 2 Conflict with family
- 1 Incarceration
- 1 Death of a spouse
- 1 Left the community/relocated
- 1 Eviction
- 1 Unfit/unsafe housing condition

Which differs from the top **8 reasons** for housing loss among respondents 16-64:

- 34 Substance use
- 29 Conflict with partner
- 28 Not enough income
- 20 Landlord/tenant conflict
- 18 Unfit/unsafe housing condition
- 15 Incarceration
- 15 Experienced abuse by partner
- 11 Mental health

Average length of homelessness by age



The older adult respondents reported a range of ages that they first experienced homelessness.

2 of the older adults experienced homelessness for the first time during 2021

2 of the older adults have experienced periods of homelessness for almost three-quarters of their lives

Older adults are experiencing homelessness longer than adults or youth on average

Women

Women, girls and gender diverse people experience homelessness differently. Their homelessness is often shaped by many intersecting factors, including housing instability linked to low incomes, homelessness beginning earlier in life, lack of access to emergency shelter when needed and high exposure to trauma and violence¹⁴.

In the Peterborough PiT Count, 63 people or 36% of respondents identified as cis-gendered women.

266

days spent homeless by women, on average

75%

of women reported chronic homelessness

1/3

of women identify as Indigenous or with Indigenous Ancestry

6

women reported having dependent children with them

17

women reported having a partner with them



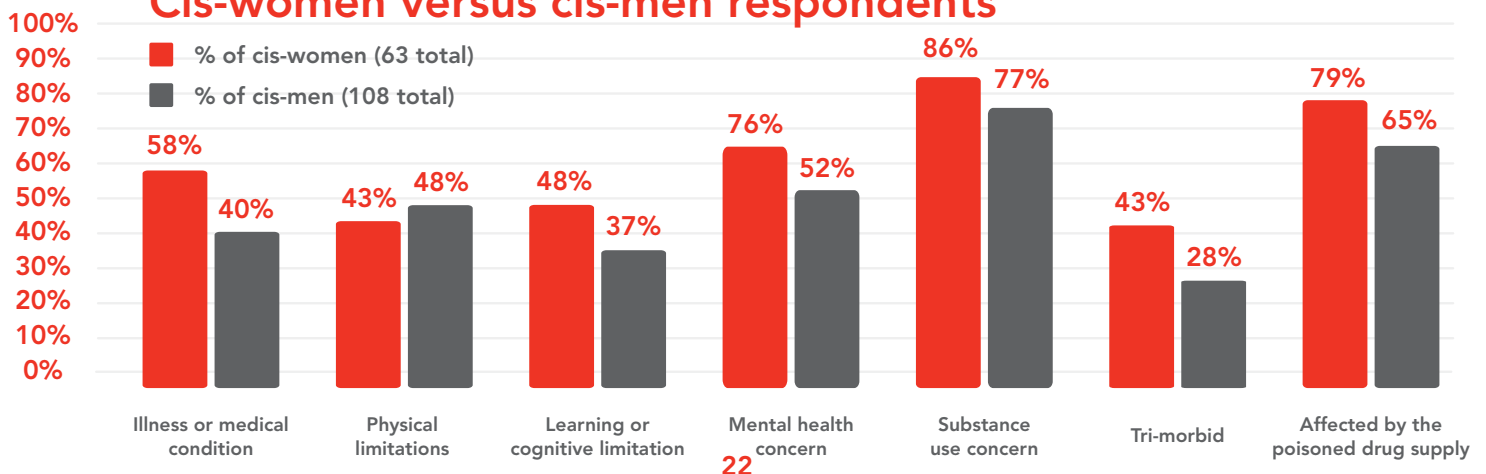
54%

of women, as children, were involved with child welfare, foster/group homes or in kinship care



Across all categories but one, women are experiencing higher rates of health and social concerns.

Cis-women versus cis-men respondents



More than **1 in 4** of women who responded to the survey reported that they lost their housing due to experiencing abuse

27%

Experience of abuse

24%

Recent hospitalization or treatment program

21%

Conflict with spouse

21%

Conflict with parent

19%

Not enough income

Almost half of women participants reported staying in a shelter, while **27%** reported living unsheltered in encampments, vehicles or in other public spaces.



- A** Homeless Shelter
- B** Someone else's place
- C** Transitional housing
- D** Unsheltered in a public space, outdoors, or in a vehicle
- E** Unsure
- F** Encampment

In Peterborough, **51%** of women reported staying somewhere other than in a shelter.

In the City of Peterborough, there are 32 emergency shelter beds designated for male identifying people, 32 beds designated as co-ed and 7 beds designated for women-identifying people. Research demonstrates that many women often avoid co-ed shelters because of past experiences of violence in those settings^{15/16}.

Women experiencing homelessness do not have enough shelter options in Peterborough.



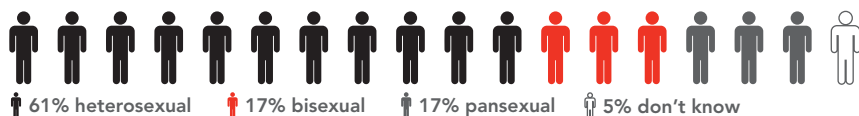
Youth

In past Point-in-Time efforts, many organized “magnet” events were hosted to draw young people experiencing hidden homelessness to community meals, and youth focused spaces to participate in the survey. Because of gathering limits related to COVID-19, drawing youth to meeting spaces was not possible, and all PiT participation from youth came from outdoor outreach efforts and youth living in shelter or transitional housing. Consequently, the data captured below represents 18 youth aged 16-24, which is a small fraction of young people experiencing homelessness in Peterborough. For reference, 38 youth participated in the survey in 2018.

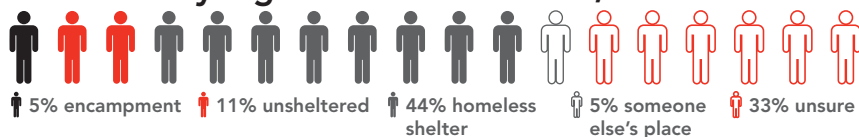
Gender



Sexual orientation



Place of stay night of December 9th, 2021



1 in 3

youth experiencing homelessness identify as Indigenous

1 in 2

of all respondents had their first experience of homelessness before their 22nd birthday

17 years

average age of first homelessness reported by youth

266 days

of homelessness on average last year among youth

The top 2 reasons that youth are homeless in Peterborough:

39%

Conflict with a parent or guardian

28%

Not enough income for housing

Pathways to homelessness

Youth experience different pathways into homelessness than their adult counterparts. Opportunities for upstream interventions must be explored for Peterborough to see an end to youth homelessness.

94%

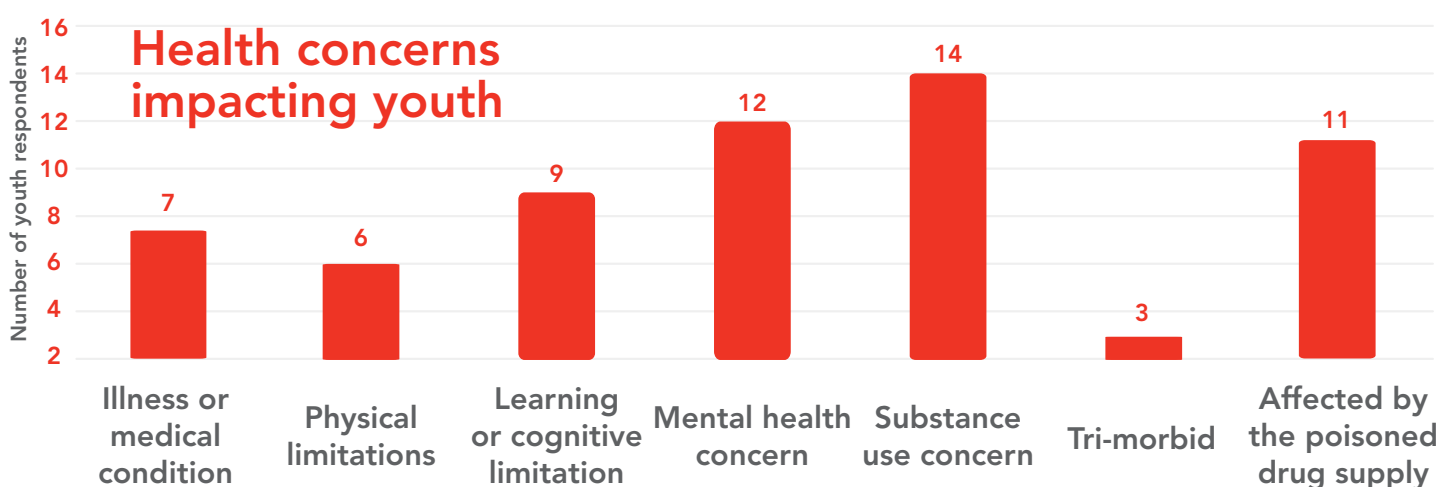
of youth report having contact with the child welfare system, group homes, foster care or kinship care as children

61%

of youth reported chronic homelessness



50% of youth report experiencing a learning or cognitive limitation, while 68% of youth report experiencing a mental health concern and 78% a substance use concern.



Many youth report experiencing multiple occurring health concerns. Youth who report a learning or cognitive limitation are twice as likely to also report a mental health concern. 83% of youth have both mental health and substance use concerns together while 17% of youth report a physical illness, mental health concern and a substance use concern (tri-morbid).

Youth organizations locally have been working hard to increase transitional housing opportunities for young people. In 2018, there were 6 youth transitional beds through the YES Shelter for Youth and Families and in 2021, YES has expanded that program to 24 beds. Transitional Housing programs at YES offer time for youth to gain valuable independent living skills, make connections to community and family supports and deepen understanding of income and budgeting.



Recommendations

Recommendation #1:

Deep investments in affordable housing from all levels of government are needed. Investments across the affordable continuum, and housing purpose built for people exiting homelessness, including Rent Geared to Income units.

Recommendation #2:

People living outside are supported in place and consulted to understand how other available accommodations could better meet their needs.

Recommendation #3:

Connect with Indigenous communities to understand how to best invest funding to reduce Indigenous homelessness. For example, allocating a percentage of funding that reflects the percentage of PiT respondents that are Indigenous, or requiring all agencies that receive funding to incorporate culturally appropriate services.

Recommendation #4:

Targeted investments across all levels of government to improve availability and access to shelter and housing for women and gender diverse people experiencing homelessness.

Recommendation #5:

Make a local commitment to end homelessness for youth by increasing the number of transitional housing spaces for youth aged 16-24 to support the transition from homelessness to independent living.

Recommendation #6:

Invest in transitional and permanent housing options for older adults over 65 that are tailored to their needs.

Recommendation #7:

Invest in housing and programmatic interventions that prevent people from reaching the chronic homelessness threshold.

Recommendation #8:

Conduct ongoing evaluations of the homelessness system to understand Peterborough's progress on actualizing housing as a human right within current socio-economic contexts. Assess our community's fidelity to the Coordinated Access model as part of evaluating our progress.

Recommendation #9:

Develop and implement data practices around understanding prevalence and causes of deaths among people experiencing homelessness, including differentiating death from other reasons when removing people from the By-Name Priority List. Incorporate preventing death into Peterborough's response to homelessness.

Limitations

1. COVID-19 Pandemic

a. Context

The third nationally coordinated Point-In-Time count was scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2020. Typically, the nationally coordinated PiT count occurs every two years. Peterborough last counted in March of 2018 but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Peterborough PiT Count was postponed.

On December 9th, 2021, while the COVID variant Omicron was gaining traction across our community, the Peterborough PiT Count launched with a modified methodology to prevent COVID transmission. Local shelter and frontline outreach staff were engaged to survey individuals and families who were experiencing homelessness in 5 emergency shelters, 4 transitional housing programs, 1 meal program, 1 overnight warming space and in various locations where people are known to live outdoors in the city of Peterborough.

b. Limited Reach resulting from COVID-19

In the past, the United Way of Peterborough and District has focussed efforts during the 2016 and 2018 PiT Counts in more rural areas of Peterborough County. Due to the COVID pandemic, focussed enumeration activities did not occur in the County of Peterborough.

In the past PiT Count teams hosted “magnet events” to attract people experiencing homelessness to community spaces to access a free service like a haircut or meal program. These open community spaces and meet-up were not possible inside of pandemic restrictions and consequently limited the ability for the survey teams to reach people who may be experiencing ‘hidden homelessness’.

2. Timeframe

One 24-hour period is simply not long enough to capture a full picture of homelessness in a community. One service provider reported people coming forward to be surveyed for a week after the day of the PiT Count. As word travelled, more people came forward to share their current experience of homelessness. Due to the structure of the PiT count methodology, these individuals could not be captured in the 2021 data.

3. Double Count

It is acknowledged that individuals may have been counted more than once throughout the day. As part of the screening process, volunteers asked participants if they had participated in the survey earlier in the day. This question may not have filtered out all individuals who already participated as responding to the survey again would allow them to receive a second \$10 cash honorarium. Because the PiT survey is confidential, de-duplicating responses is not possible. Staff and volunteers made every effort to avoid double surveying by communicating route selection for all outdoor counts and coordinating shelter and transitional housing counts to limit likelihood of double participation.

4. Youth Homelessness

Youth homelessness is often hard to quantify because many youth experiencing housing instability fall into the category of ‘hidden homelessness’. It is common for youth to couch surf and/or continue to live in precarious and often dangerous situations because they cannot find other options. The restrictions around gathering together under COVID-19 limited the ability of the 2021 PiT Count because the planning team could not host youth-specific events to draw youth experiencing hidden homelessness together. Youth who completed the survey were either living outdoors, in shelter or in transitional housing, thus limiting the scope of understanding about youth experiencing all types of homelessness in Peterborough.



United Way
Peterborough & District

Point-in-Time 2021 - Survey Tool

SCREENING TOOL

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm a volunteer for the **Peterborough housing needs survey**. We are conducting a survey to get a better understanding of homelessness in Peterborough City and County.

People define homelessness in all kinds of ways. In this survey we are using this definition. Individuals or families who:

- Are living or staying in an emergency shelter like Brock Mission, Cameron House, The Overflow Shelter, or Crossroads – and do not have another permanent place to live
- Are living outdoors, camping at night, sleeping rough, living in their vehicle or in other spaces that are not intended for permanent living
- Are couch surfing, staying with friends or living with others where they cannot stay there safely as long as they need to.
- Staying in transitional housing, hotel, motel, hospital, jail or another program or institution where if released or discharged, they would not have a permanent, safe place to go.

The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.

We have two screening questions; would you like to see if you are eligible for this study?

A. Have you answered this survey with a person with this name tag today?

[YES: Thank and tally]

[NO: Go to B]

B. Where are you staying tonight? [DO NOT READ CATEGORIES]

a. DECLINE TO ANSWER	[THANK & END SCREENING]
b. OWN APARTMENT / HOUSE	C1. Do you have access to a permanent residence where you can safely stay as long as you want?
c. SOMEONE ELSE'S PLACE	
d. MOTEL/HOTEL (SELF FUNDED)	
e. HOSPITAL	
f. TREATMENT CENTRE	a. Yes [THANK & END]
g. JAIL, PRISON, REMAND CENTRE	b. No (not permanent AND/OR not safe) [BEGIN SURVEY]
	c. Don't Know [BEGIN SURVEY]
	d. Decline to answer [THANK & END]
h. HOMELESS SHELTER (EMERGENCY, FAMILY OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER)	[BEGIN SURVEY]
i. HOTEL/MOTEL (FUNDED BY CITY OR HOMELESS PROGRAM)	
j. TRANSITIONAL SHELTER/HOUSING	
k. UNSHELTERED IN A PUBLIC SPACE (E.G. STREET, PARK, BUS SHELTER, FOREST OR ABANDONED BUILDING)	
l. ENCAMPMENT (E.G. GROUP OF TENTS, MAKESHIFT SHELTERS OR OTHER LONG-TERM OUTDOOR SETTLEMENT)	
m. VEHICLE (CAR, VAN, RV, TRUCK, BOAT)	
n. UNSURE: INDICATE PROBABLE LOCATION _____(b. - m.)	



United Way
Peterborough & District

Point-in-Time 2021 - Data Tables

Point-in-Time 2021 - Data Tables

The findings of the Point-in-Time survey can be found in the following data tables. The data is based on the responses from the 176 survey participants (n=176).

For additional information or data, please contact United Way Peterborough & District.

Chronic Homelessness

People who have experienced homelessness for more than 180 days in the last year

	Age 16-24 (n=18)	Age 25-64 (n=147)	Age 65+ (n=11)	Total (n=176)
Gender Male	3	64	8	75
Gender Female	6	40	1	47
Gender Non-Binary	0	1	0	1
Gender not disclosed	2	1	1	4
Indigenous Identity or Ancestry	6	33	1	40
Individual	8	90	8	106
Two or more individuals	3	13	1	17
Single parent with children	0	1	0	1
Staying at an Emergency Shelter	5	39	5	49
Unsheltered	3	39	0	42
Unknown Accommodations	3	20	4	27
Have not stayed in an Emergency Shelter in the past year	3	26	3	32

Health and Chronic Homelessness

	Age 16-24 (n=18)	Age 25-64 (n=147)	Age 65+ (n=11)	Total % of population
Learning or cognitive limitation	9	61	3	41%
Physical Limitation	6	59	6	40%
Illness or Medical Condition	7	75	9	52%
Mental Health Condition	12	90	5	61%
Substance Use Concern	14	120	6	80%
Tri-morbid	3	54	3	34%
Affected by the Drug Poisoning Crisis	11	108	3	69%

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