

Focus on Homelessness

The West: Galway, Mayo and Roscommon

Regional Editions, August 2021

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Introduction

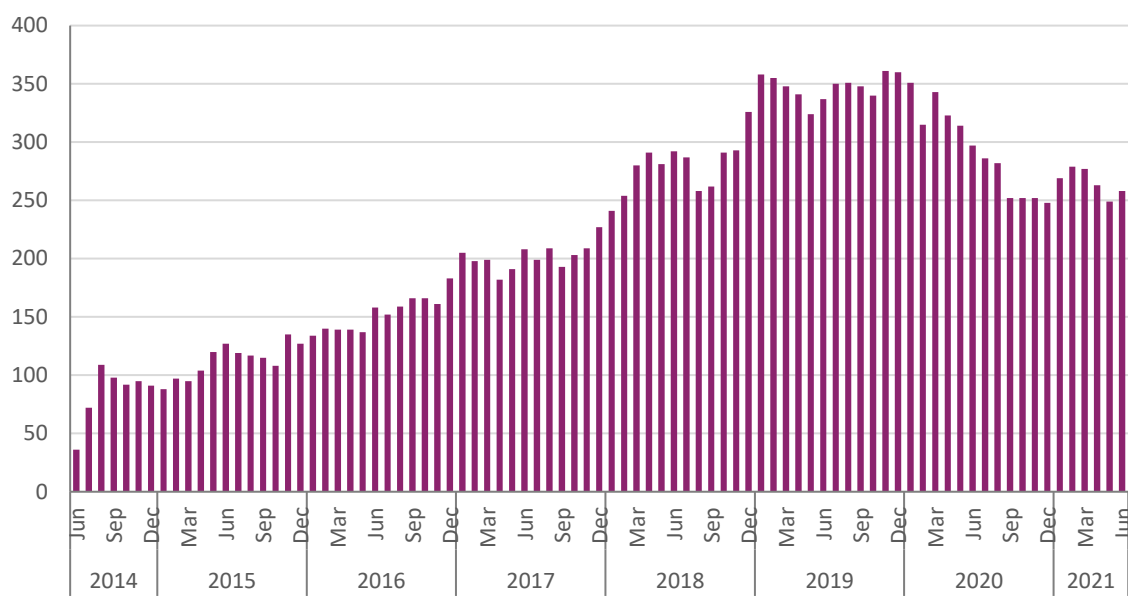
Focus Ireland and the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin have collaborated for over a decade to bring high quality and up-to-date research on homelessness to a wider audience and into the core of public policy formation. Since 2014, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) has published data on the number of adults and child dependents in emergency accommodation each month. In addition, over the same period, Quarterly Performance Reports and Financial Reports have contained data on the duration and cost of homelessness in Ireland.¹ 'Focus on Homelessness' aims to make this substantial body of data available in an accessible and reliable format, and provides a detailed report on the extent, nature and duration of homelessness, in addition to the public expenditure on households experiencing homelessness in Ireland.

This new series in the Focus on Homelessness project will take a closer look at homelessness around the country by providing a detailed report for each region. There will be nine reports in total, following the nine regions under which the monthly data is published.

This report looks at homelessness in the West of Ireland. The West refers here to counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.

¹ For a more detailed description of these data sources, see Eoin O'Sullivan, Aisling Reidy and Mike Allen (2021) *Focus on Homelessness: Significant Developments in Homelessness 2014-2021* (Dublin: Focus Ireland) and Eoin O'Sullivan and Thadee Mustafiri (2020) *Public Expenditure on Services for Households Experiencing Homelessness* (Dublin: Focus Ireland).

Figure 1: Adults in Emergency Accommodation

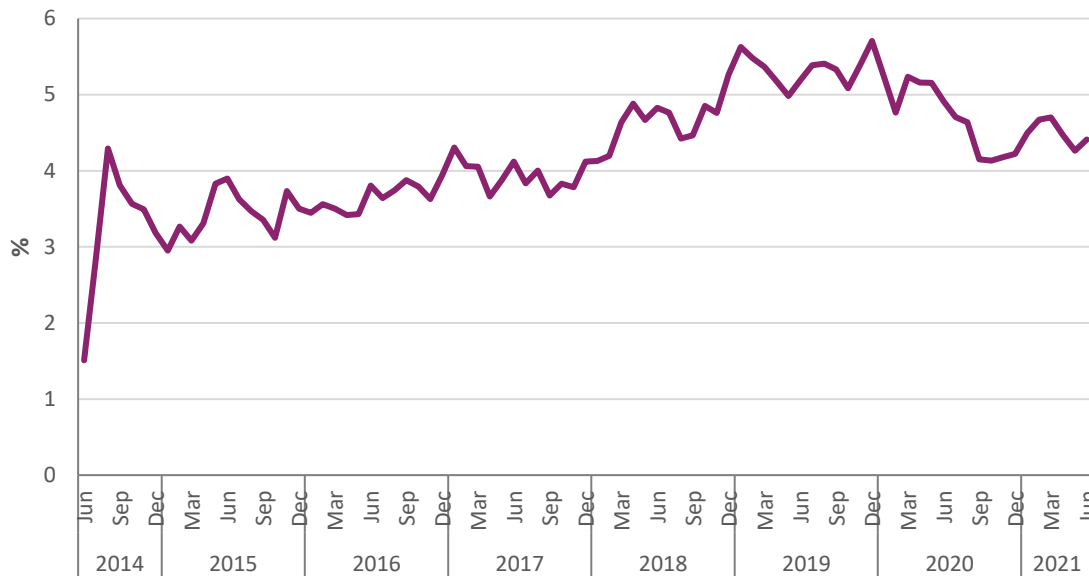


As of June 2021, there were 258 adults in emergency accommodation in the West. The peak was 361 adults in November 2019, and in the past year has fallen by 13%.

Breaking this down by county, the majority of adults in emergency accommodation in the West are in Galway, which has the largest city in the region. In June 2021, Galway accounted for 87% of adults in emergency accommodation in the region, and Mayo/Roscommon for the remaining 13%.

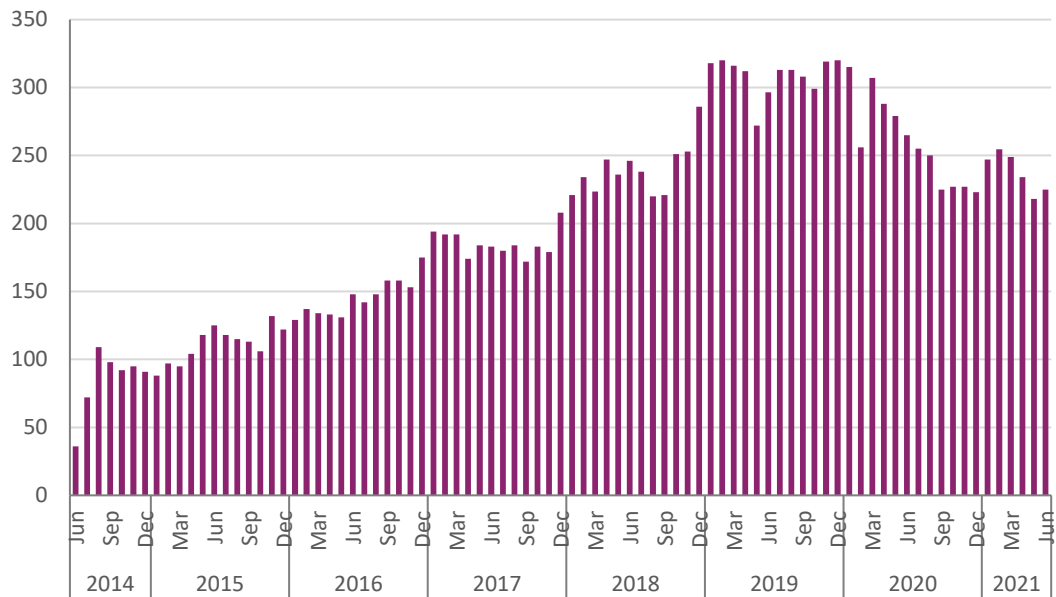
This figure includes all adults, whether single or in a couple, and whether or not they are accompanied by children.

Figure 2: Adults in the Region as a Percent of all Adults in Emergency Accommodation



Comparing the West to the overall national figure, Figure 2 shows that the West accounts for between 4 – 5% of all adults in emergency accommodation nationally. This figure peaked in December 2019 at 5.7%, during the same period that the number of adults in emergency accommodation in the West reached its all-time high. Since the beginning of 2020, this figure has decreased as the number of adults in the region fell at a faster rate than the national figure.

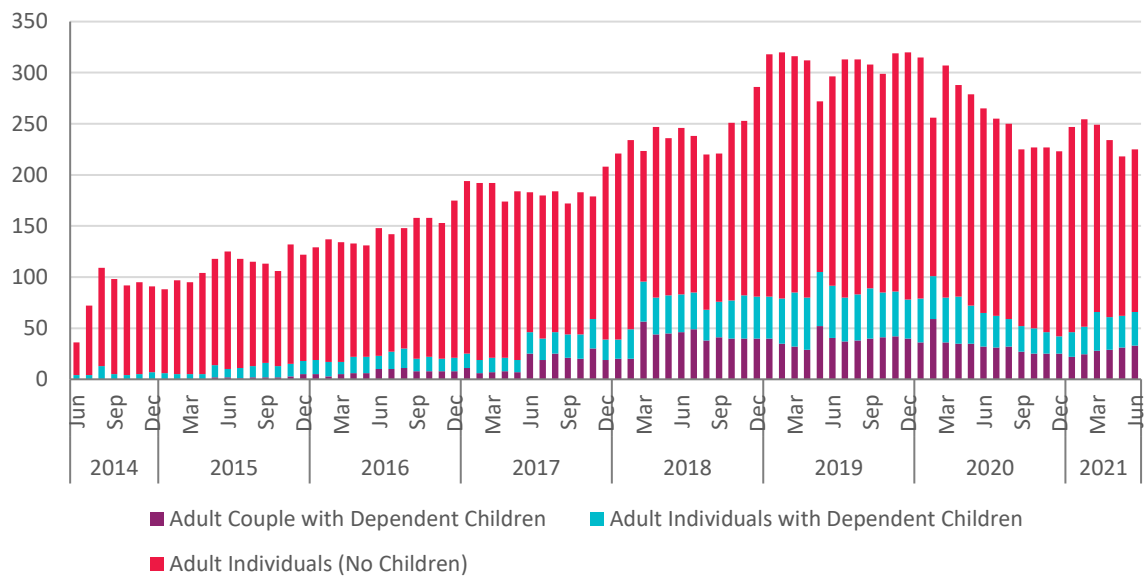
Figure 3: Households in Emergency Accommodation



After increasing steadily since 2014, the number of households in emergency accommodation in the West reached a peak of 320 households in February 2019 and again in December 2019, after which it began to decline. This figure has since decreased by 30%. As of June 2021, there were 225 households in emergency accommodation in the West.

Presenting the scale of homelessness in terms of the number of households affected shifts the focus towards providing solutions to homelessness, which are homes. This gives the clearest indication of the number of dwellings required to meet the needs of households currently in emergency accommodation in the West.

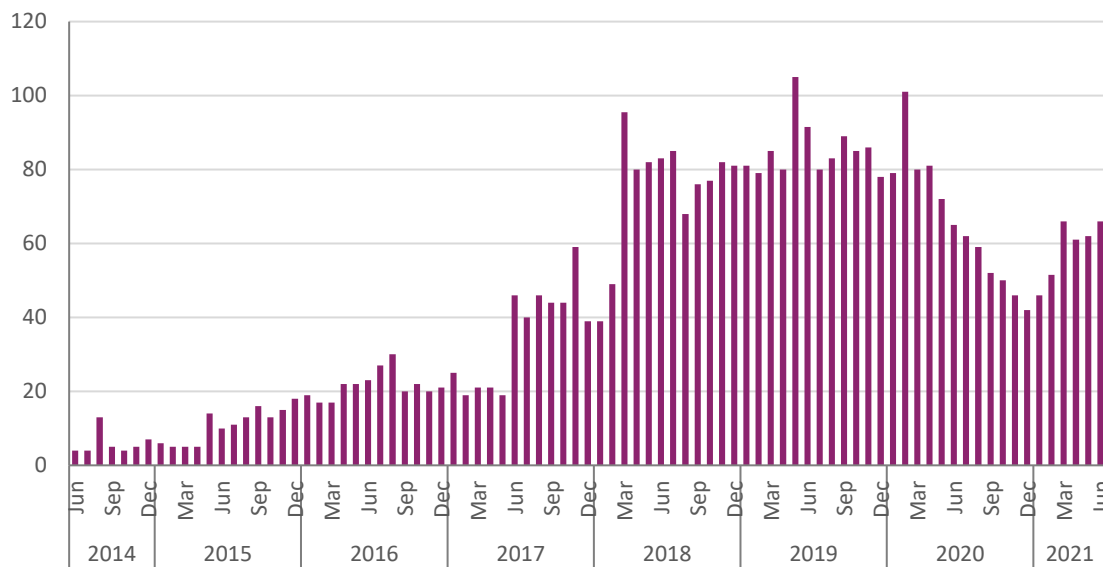
Figure 4: Household Type



Adult individuals without children (often referred to as single homelessness) make up the majority of homeless households in the West. Of the 225 households in emergency accommodation in the West in June 2021, 71% were adult individuals and 29% were households with children. Of the households with accompanying children, half are single-parent families.

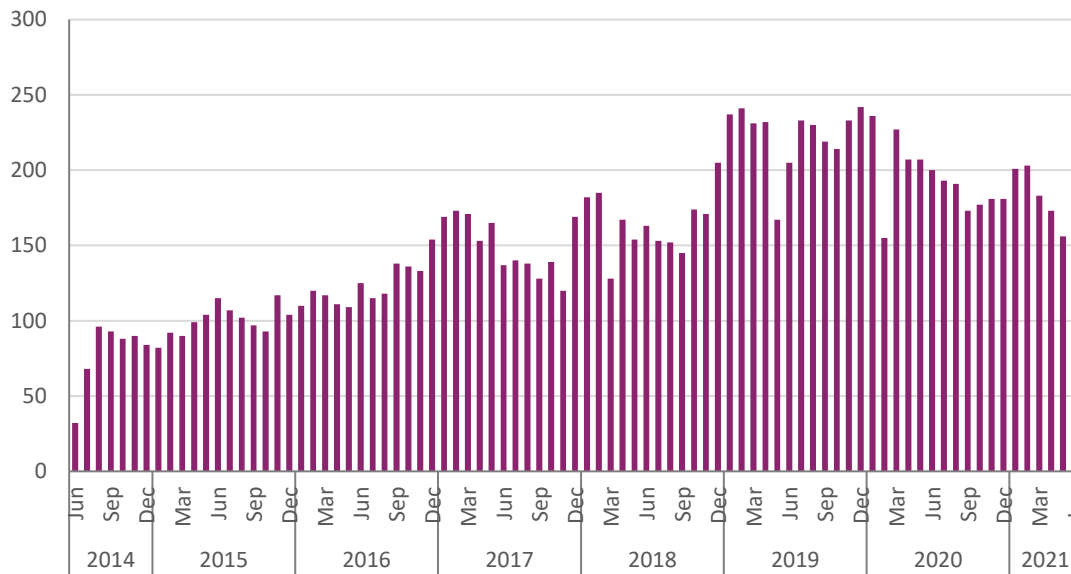
Before 2016, there were very few households with children in emergency accommodation in the West. This is similar to the pattern nationally, where there was a rapid growth in family homelessness over the past few years followed by a decline again since early 2020.

Figure 5: Families in Emergency Accommodation



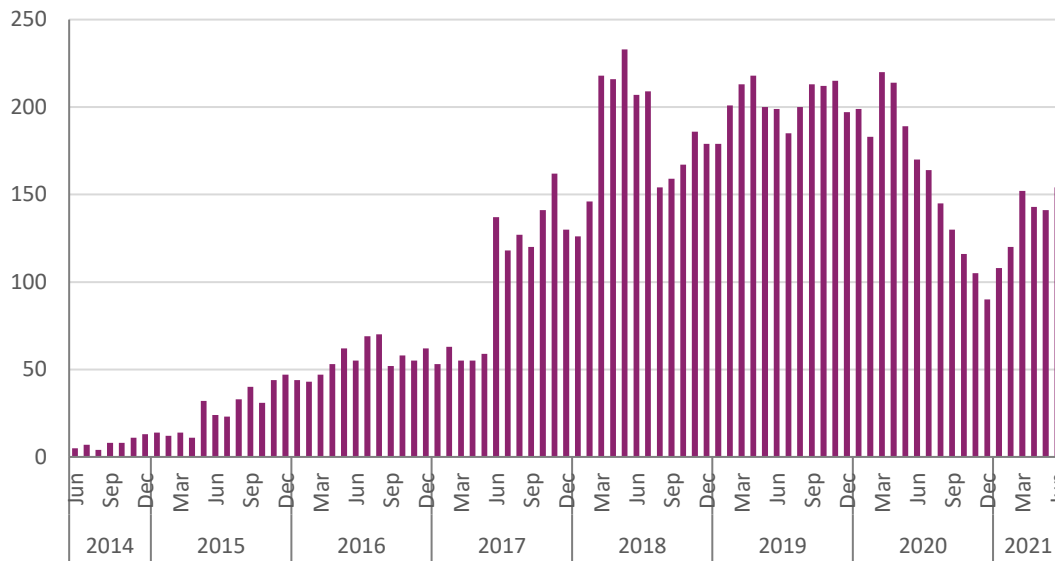
The number of families in emergency accommodation in the West is now over ten times higher than it was in June 2014. After remaining around 80 families from 2018 to mid-2020, and reaching a peak of 105 in May 2019, it has since declined. Since the beginning of 2020, there has been a sharp drop in family homelessness nationally, with the number of families in the West falling by 16% in this period. As of June 2021, there were 66 families in emergency accommodation in the West.

Figure 6: Adult-Only Households



Adult-only households are either single adult individuals or adults in couples without accompanying children. After increasing steadily since June 2014, the number of adult-only households in the West stabilised around 240 from the beginning of 2019. After reaching a peak of 242 in December 2019, there has been a 34% decline. As of June 2021, there were 159 adult-only households in Emergency Accommodation in the West.

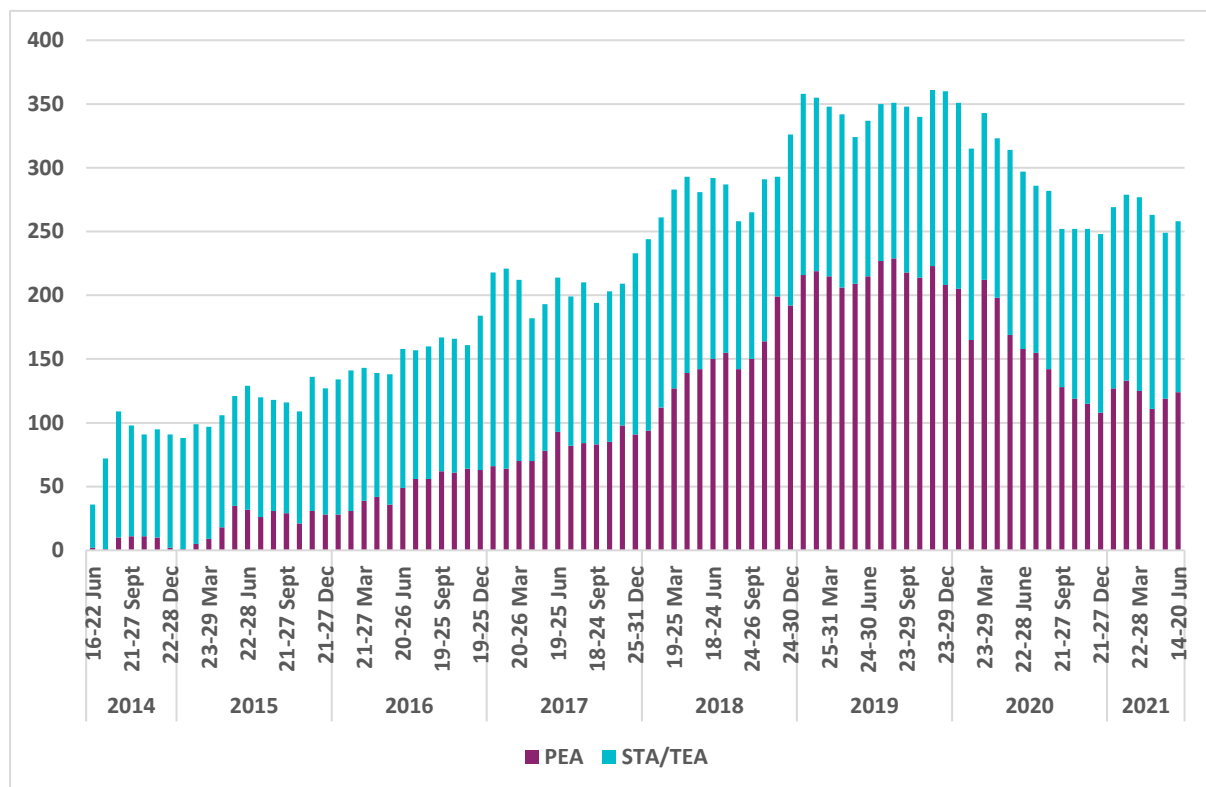
Figure 7: Child Dependents



The number of children in emergency accommodation follows the trend of families as shown in Figure 5. In the West, as of June 2021, there were 154 children in emergency accommodation. From under 15 children each month in 2014, there has been an average of 136 children in emergency accommodation each month to date in 2021.

The highest number was reached in May 2018, with 233 children in emergency accommodation in the West. After this, the number remained around 200 throughout 2019. 2020 saw a sharp drop in the number of children in emergency accommodation in the region, but this has steadily increased again in the first six months of 2021.

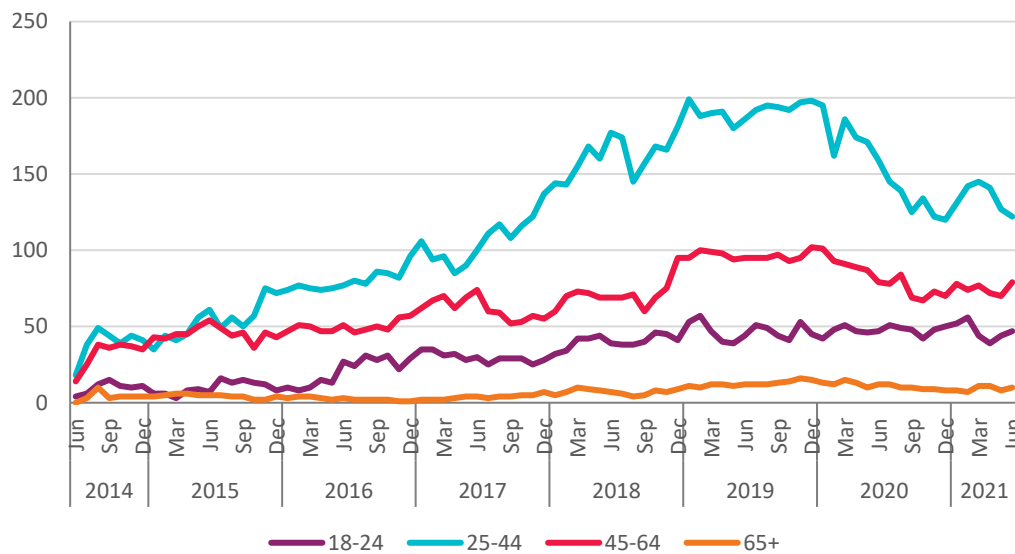
Figure 8: Accommodation Type



There are three types of emergency accommodation reported in the monthly homeless reports. Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA) includes hotels, B&Bs and other residential facilities that are privately owned and are being used on an emergency basis. Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) is emergency accommodation, primarily congregate shelters and Family Hubs, with onsite professional support, and operated by Non-Government Organisations fully or partially funded by Section 10 funding via the relevant local authority. Temporary Emergency Accommodation (TEA) is the smallest category and includes emergency accommodation with no (or minimal) supports, TEAs are operated both by NGOs and private operators. In the West, the number of TEA is very low and so has been combined with STA.

Up to mid-2018, STA/TEA was the most common in the West, but was then overtaken by PEA, which was increasing rapidly up until 2020. PEA tends to be predominantly allocated to families, hence the rapid increase and subsequent decrease in the numbers here, reflecting the trends in family homelessness over this period, as shown in Figure 5. There is now fairly equal reliance on both accommodation types, and in June 2021, the ratio is 48% in PEA compared to 52% in STA/TEA.

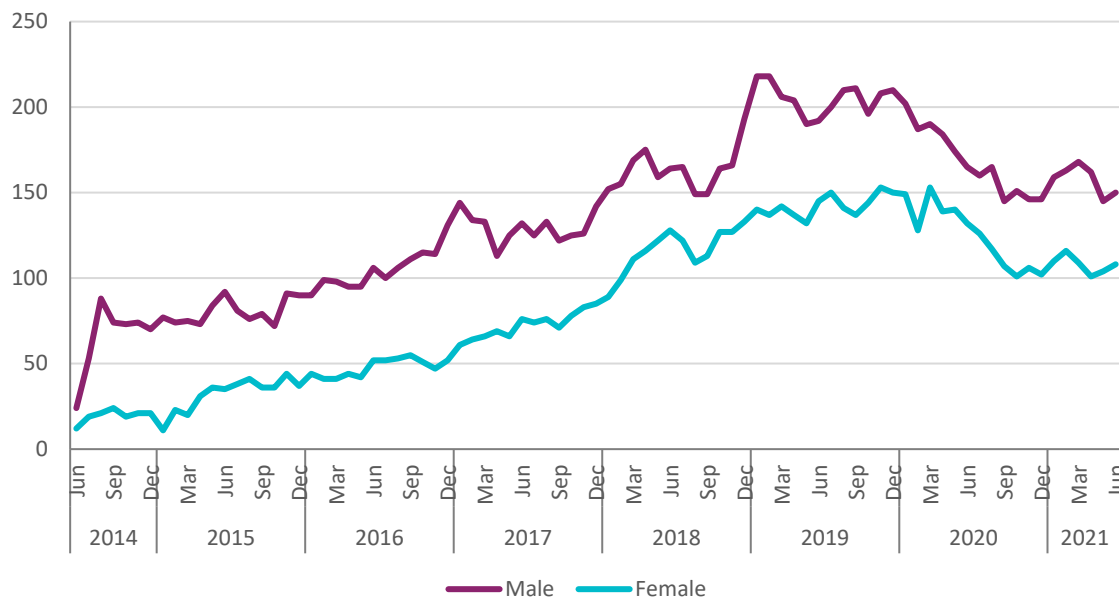
Figure 9: Age Profile



25–44-year-olds are the largest age group represented here, accounting for around half of adults in emergency accommodation in the West. The next largest group is 45–64-year-olds (30–35%), followed by young adults aged 18–24 (15–20%). People aged over 65 years account for less than 5% of all adults in emergency accommodation.

All age groups have seen a rise in homelessness over the past six years except for the 65+ age group, which has remained below 16 people throughout this period. The largest rise has been among 18–24-year-old age group, which is now ten times higher than in June 2014. Since the total number of adults in emergency accommodation in the West began to fall in late 2019, the biggest decrease has been among the 25-44 age group, falling by 38%. The youngest age group is the only cohort to have continued to increase over this period.

Figure 10: Adults by Gender



As of June 2021, there were 150 adult men in emergency accommodation in the West and 108 adult women, a ratio of 58:42. Since June 2014, the region has since seen an increase in the number of women in emergency accommodation, when the ratio was closer to 70:30.

At the peak of adult homelessness in November 2019, there were 208 men and 153 women in emergency accommodation in the West. Since then, the number of both men and women has fallen at a similar rate.

Figure 11: New Presentations to Emergency Accommodation

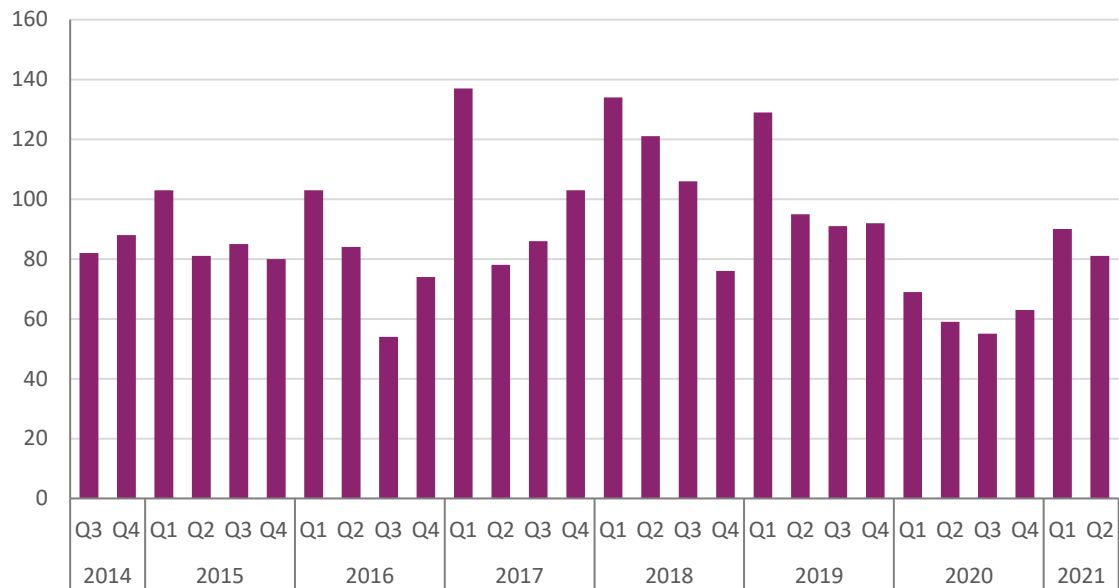


Figure 11 shows the number of adults presenting as homeless for the first time to Local Authorities in the West and provided with emergency accommodation each quarter since Quarter 1 2014. At its highest, 137 individuals presented as homeless in Q1 2017. On average in 2020, 4.7 individuals presented as homeless each week in the West, compared to 6.7 per week in 2015. To date, the first two quarters of 2021 have had a higher number of presentations than any quarter in 2020, with an average of 6.6 individuals presenting as homeless each week.

Figure 12: Adult Exits to Housing

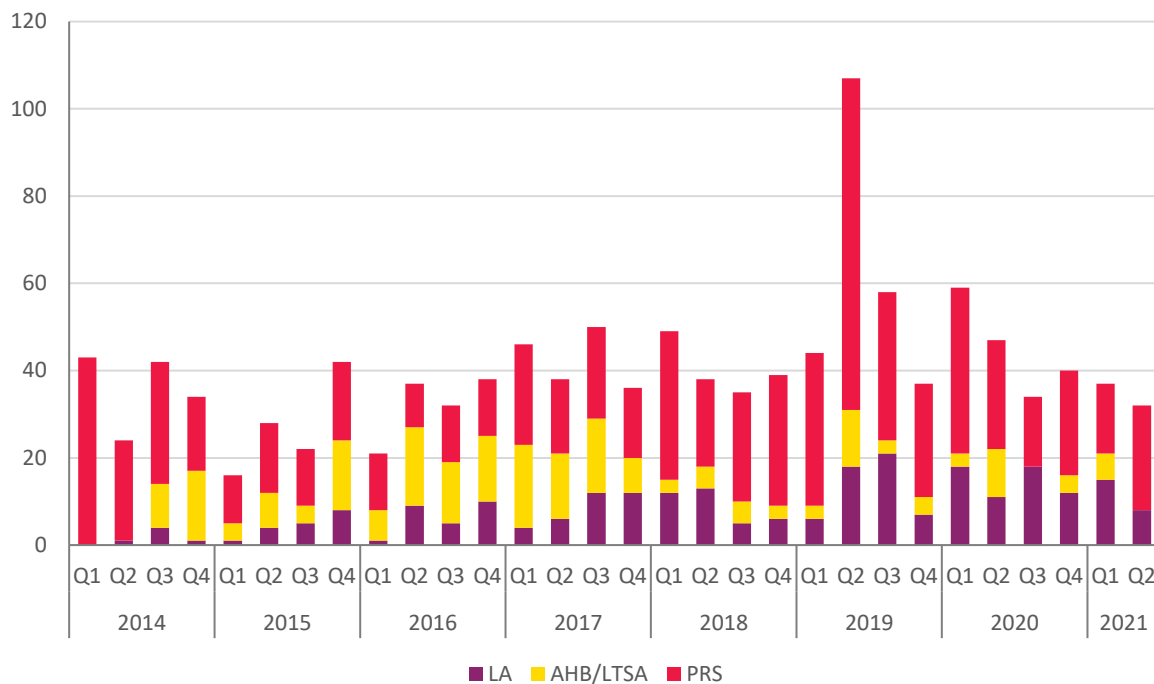
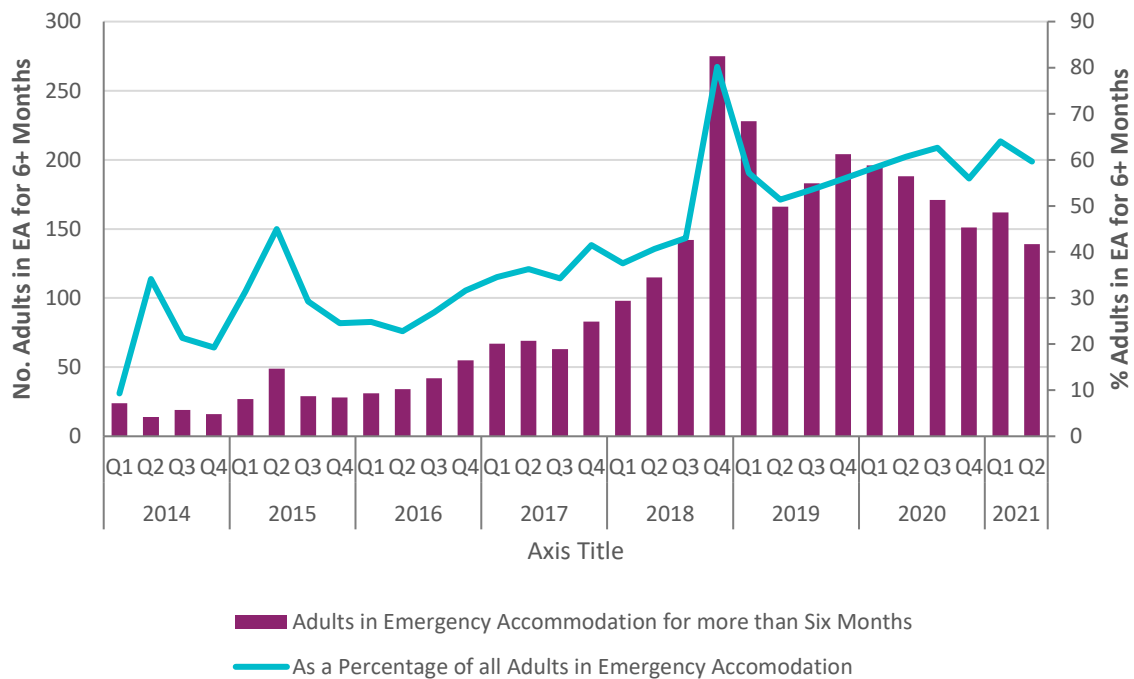


Figure 12 presents the number of adults exiting Emergency Accommodation in the West each quarter and their destination. LA represents exits to Local Authority housing, AHB/LTSA is for housing provided by Approved Housing Bodies and PRS is exits to the Private Rented Sector, which are largely supported by HAP payments.

The highest number of exits in one quarter was Q2 in 2019, which as shown in chart above is considerably higher than the average. This is the only quarter during this period which had a higher number of people exiting homelessness than entering.

Overall during the period Q1 2014 – Q2 2021, there were 1,205 adult exits from emergency accommodation to housing in the West: 60% to the PRS, 19% to AHB housing and 21% to Local Authority housing.

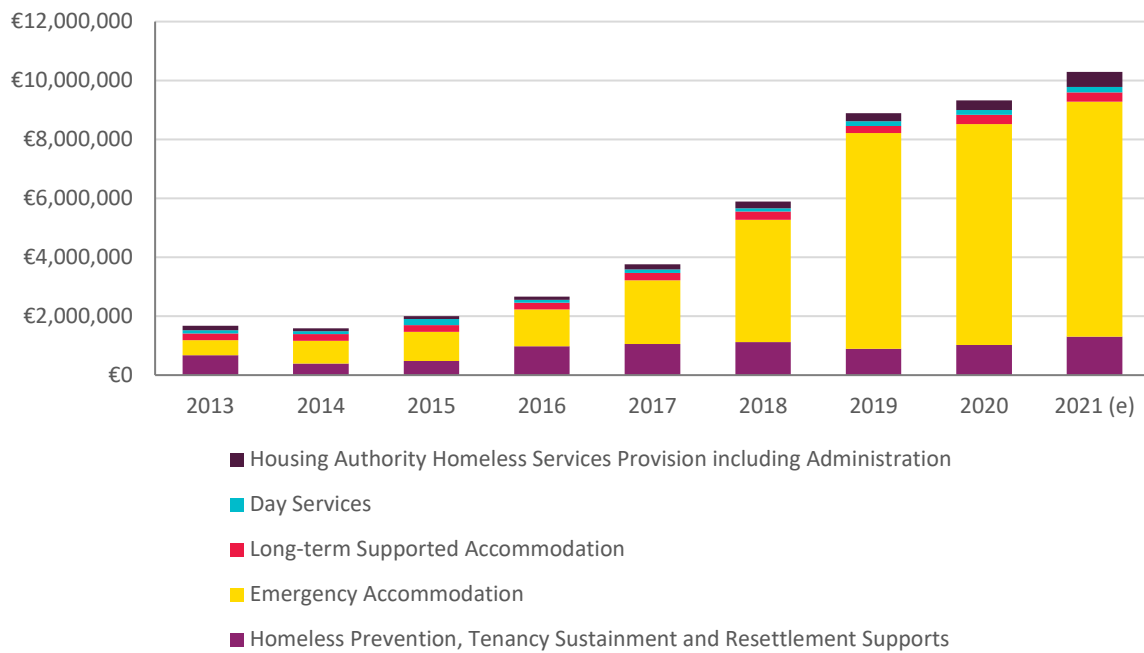
Figure 13: Adults in Emergency Accommodation for Over 6 Months



The number of adults experiencing long-term homelessness, defined as over 6 months, is shown in Figure 13 above. In Q2 2021, 59.7% of all homeless adults in the West, or 139 people, had been in Emergency Accommodation for longer than 6 months.

This reached its highest point in the last quarter of 2018, at 80.2%. From the data in Figure 11, we can see that 2018 experienced the highest number of average presentations per week of all the years recorded, with an average of 8.4 adults presenting as homeless each week. This coincides with the decline of exits to LA and AHB housing in 2018 shown in Figure 12.

Figure 14: Section 10 Expenditure



Actual expenditure by central (DHPLG) and local government on services for households experiencing homelessness in the West increased from €1.68 million in 2013 to €9.33 in 2020. In 2021, the West estimates it will spend €10.29 million.

Emergency accommodation has been the largest category of expenditure in the region each year since 2014. In 2020, expenditure on emergency accommodation in the West was €7.49 million, or 80% of total expenditure. Prevention accounted for 11% of expenditure in 2020, Day Services for 2%, Housing Authority services for 3% and LTSA for 3%.

Between 2013 and 2020, 69% of total expenditure in the West was on emergency accommodation. Annual expenditure in this category in 2020 was over 14 times higher than in 2013.

After emergency accommodation, Housing Authority service provision is the category which has seen the biggest increase, having doubled since 2013. Spending across all categories has increased over this period.

[Publication data on this page]

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