

A stylized, dark purple house icon with a large arched doorway and a four-pane window, set against a lighter purple background.

Focus on Homelessness

The South-West: Cork and Kerry

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Challenging homelessness. Changing lives.

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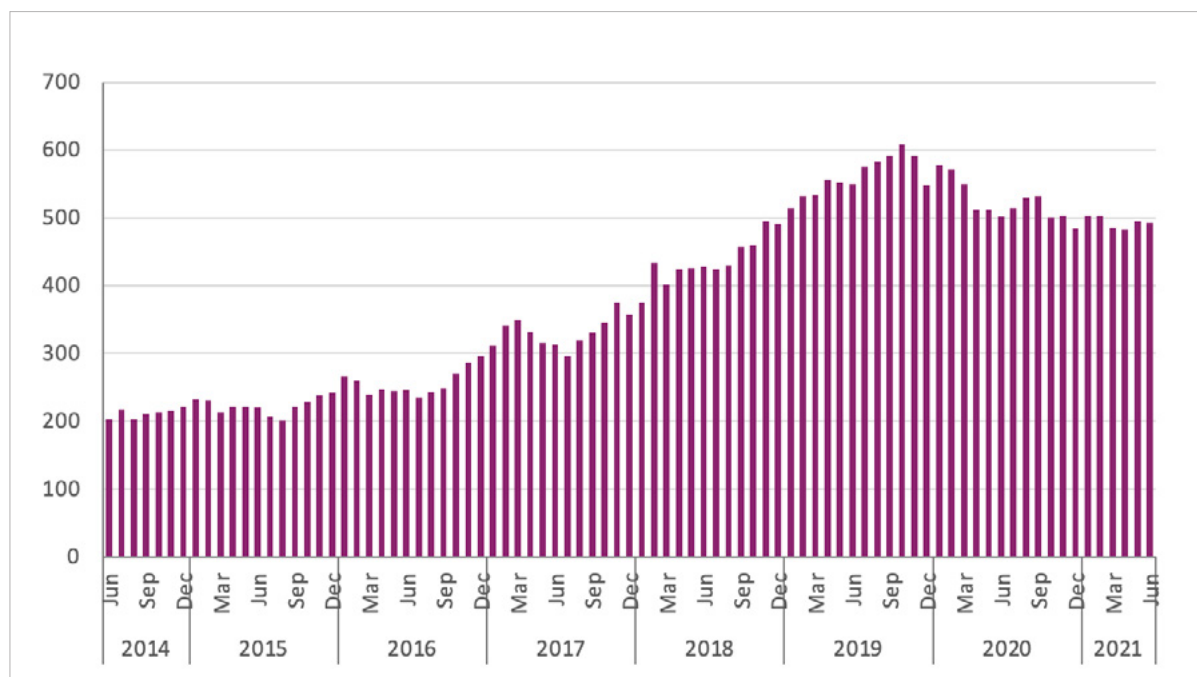
Introduction

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, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) 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. ‘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 South-West of Ireland. The South-West refers here to counties Cork and Kerry.

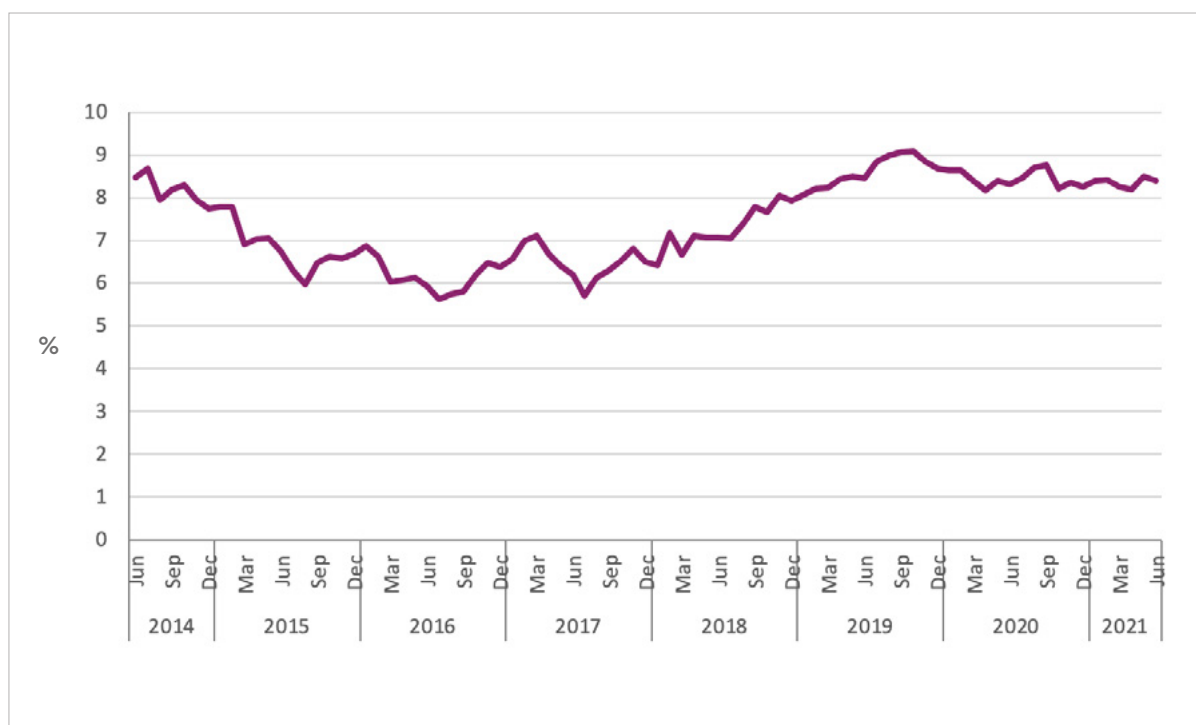
¹ For a more detailed description of these data sources, see Eoin O’Sullivan, Aisling Reidy and Mike Allen (2021) Focus on Homelessness: Significant Developments in Homelessness 2014-2021 (Dublin: Focus Ireland) and Eoin O’Sullivan and Thadee Mustafiri (2020) Public Expenditure on Services for Households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

Figure 1: Adults in Emergency Accommodation

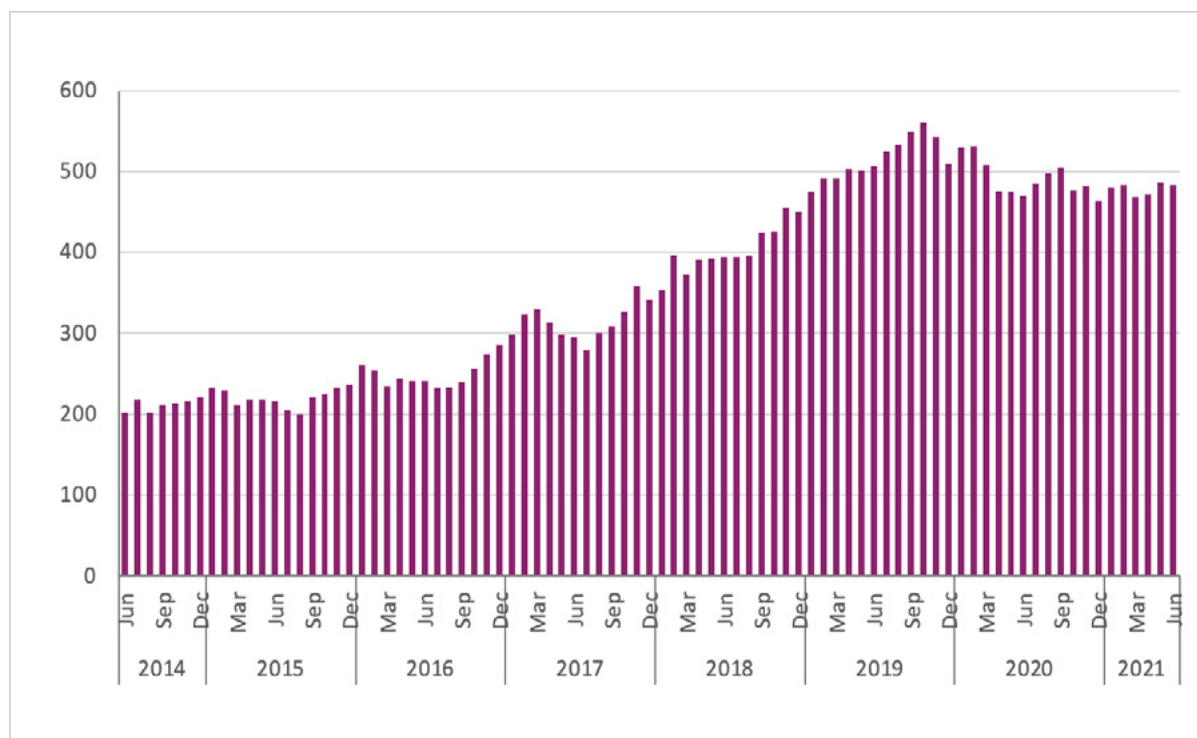
As of June 2021, there were 492 adults in emergency accommodation in the South-West. This number has risen by 144% since June 2014, when these figures were first published. After rising to an all-time high of 608 adults in October 2019, the numbers declined and has plateaued around 500 since mid-2020.

Breaking this down by county, the majority of adults in emergency accommodation in the South-West are in Cork, due to Cork city being the largest urban area in the region. On average, Cork accounts for over 70% of adults in emergency accommodation in the region. The number of adults in emergency accommodation in both counties has more than doubled over the past seven years, with the numbers in Kerry rising from around 30 adults in 2014 to 80 in June 2021, and in Cork, rising from under 200 adults to 412 in the same period.

This figure includes all adults, whether they are 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

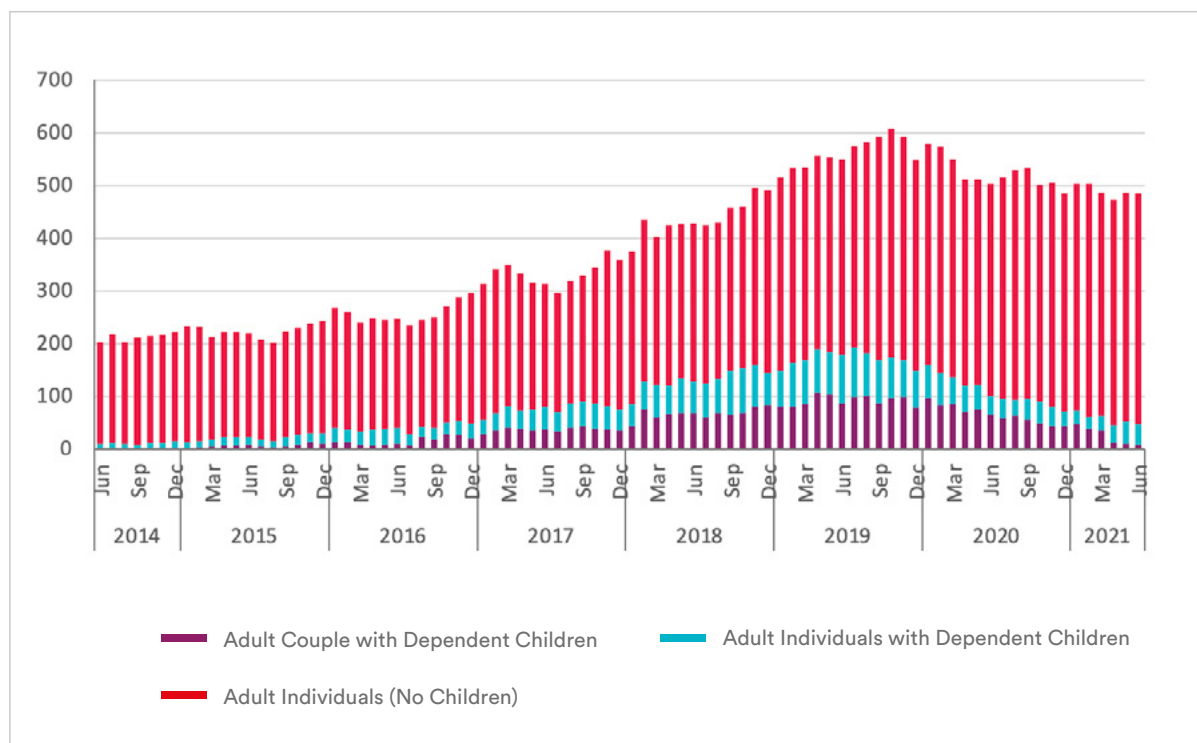
Comparing the South-West to the overall national figure, Figure 2 shows that the South-West accounts for around 8.5% of all adults in emergency accommodation. This figure peaked in October 2019 at 9.9%, when the South-West was at its highest level. Since late 2019, this figure has remained steadily between 8.2 – 8.8%.

Figure 3: Households in Emergency Accommodation

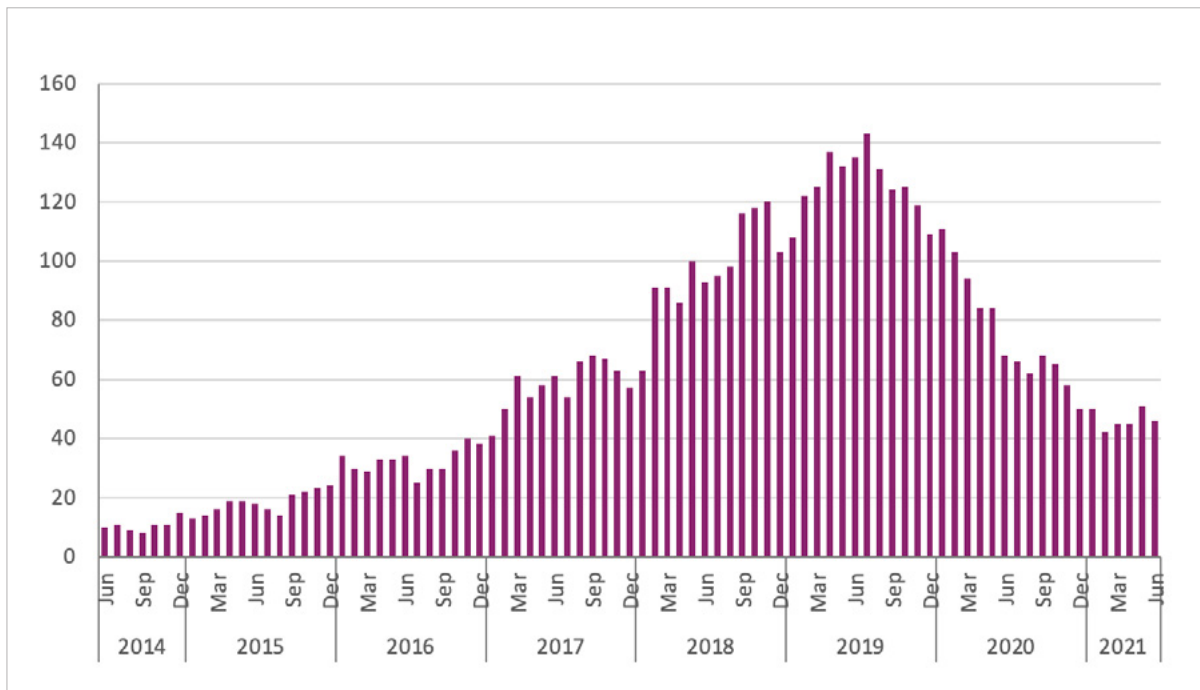
Following a very similar pattern to the total number of adults as shown in Figure 1, the total number of households in the South-West rose steadily from 2014 to 2019 and has since remained around 480.

The highest number of households was reached in October 2019 at 560. It has since fallen by 14% and as of June 2021, there were 484 households in Emergency Accommodation in the South-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 South-West.

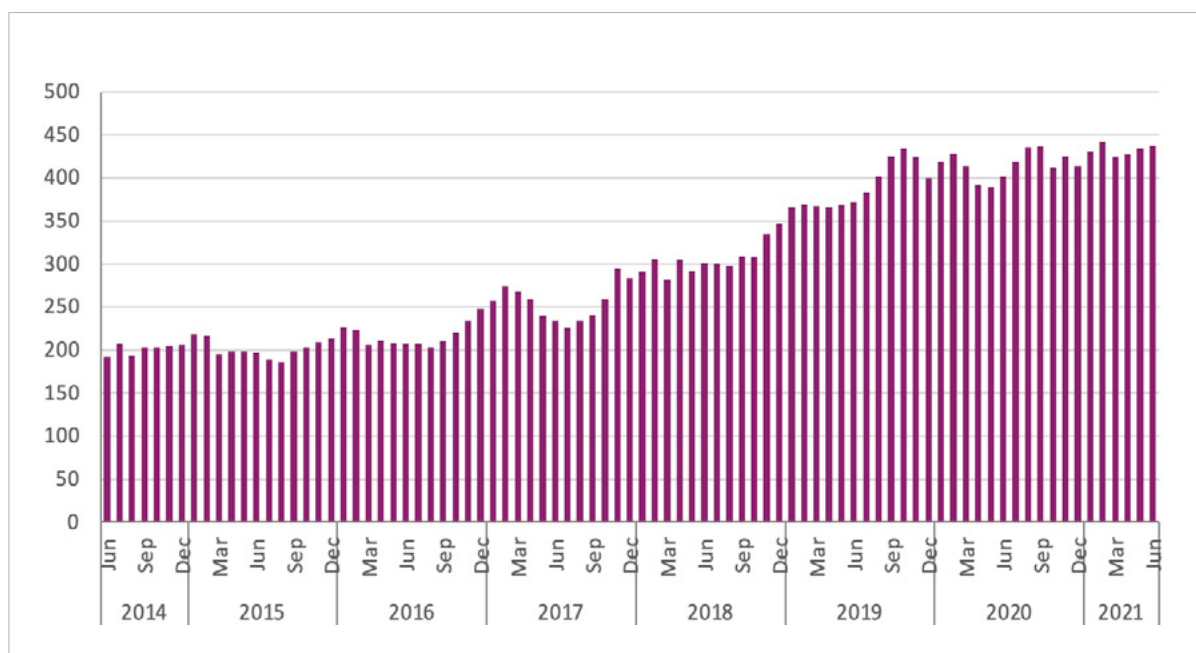
Figure 4: Household Type

Adult individuals without accompanying children (often referred to as single homelessness) make up the majority of homeless households in the South-West. Of the 484 households in Emergency Accommodation in the South-West in June 2021, 90% were adult individuals without accompanying children and 10% were households with children. Of the households with accompanying children, the majority are single-parent families.

Figure 5: Families in Emergency Accommodation

In June 2014, there were 10 families in emergency accommodation in the South West. This reached a peak of 143 in July 2019 and has since declined by 68%.

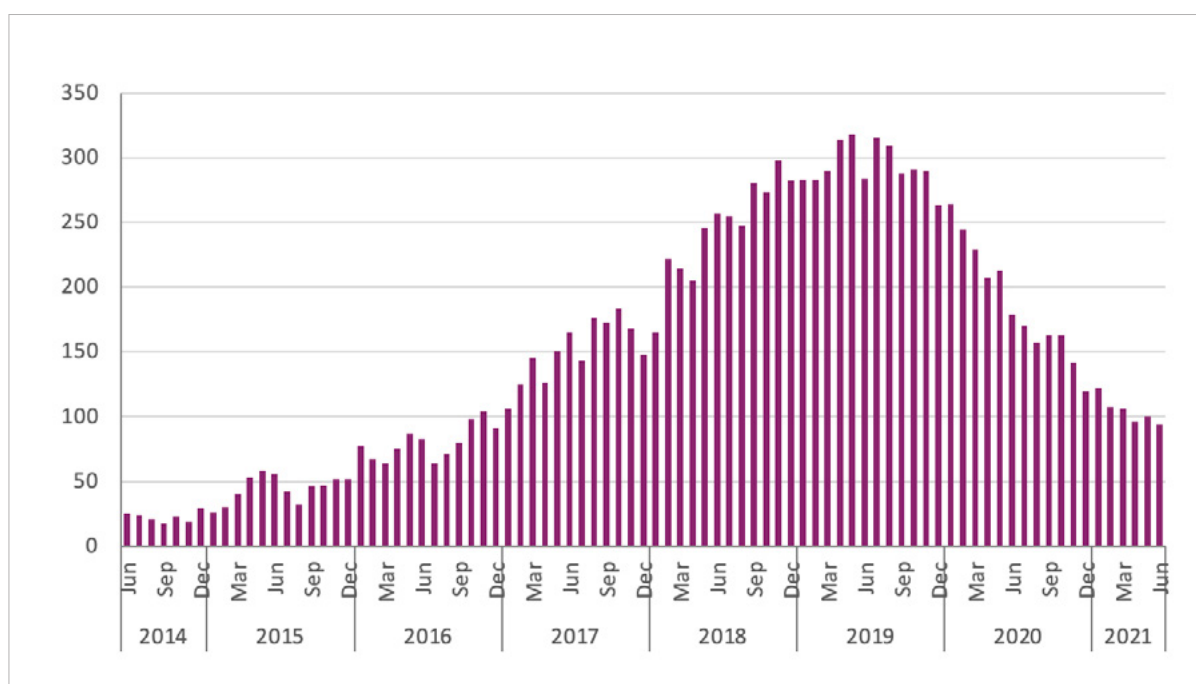
Since the beginning of 2020, there has been a sharp drop in family homelessness nationally, with the number of families in the South-West falling by 59% in this period. As of June 2021, there were 46 families in emergency accommodation in the South-West.

Figure 6: Adult-Only Households

Adult-only households are either single adult individuals or adults in couples without accompanying children.

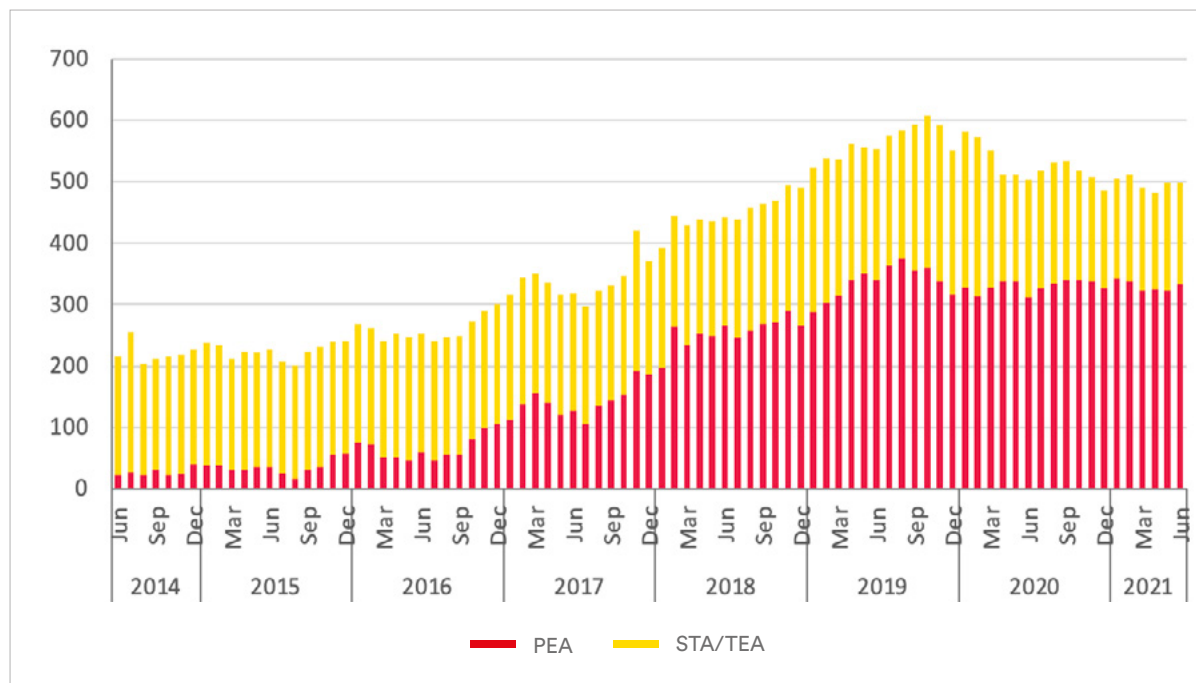
Contrasting with the trend for families shown in Figure 5, the number of adult-only households has continued to increase throughout the period shown. Since mid-2020, this growth has slowed and has now remained around 430 for the past year.

The highest-ever number of adult-only households was reached in March 2021 at 442. As of June 2021, there were 438 adult-only households in emergency accommodation in the South-West.

Figure 7: Child Dependents

The number of children in emergency accommodation follows the trend of families in emergency accommodation, as shown in Figure 5, and as of June 2021 there were 94 children in emergency accommodation. This is the lowest level since December 2016.

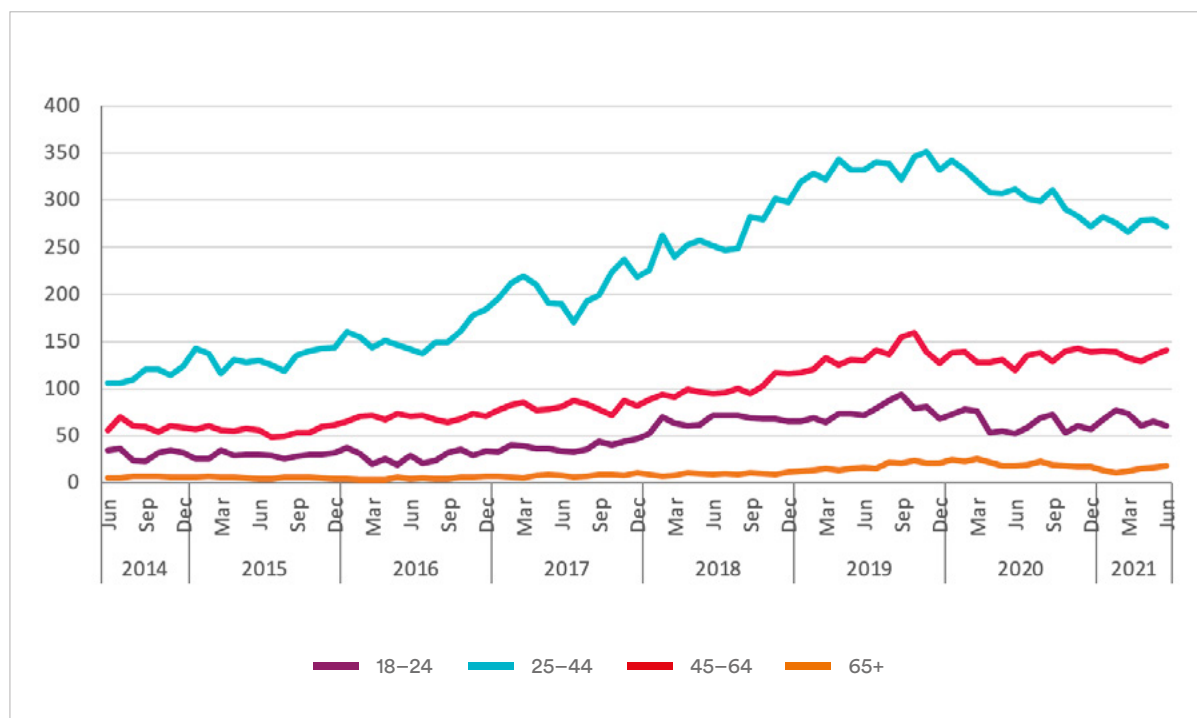
The highest number was reached in May 2019, with 318 children in emergency accommodation in the South-West. Since then, the number of children in emergency accommodation in the South-West has declined by 70%.

Figure 8: Accommodation Type

There are three types of Emergency Accommodation reported in the monthly 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 South-West, the number of TEA is very low and so has been combined with STA.

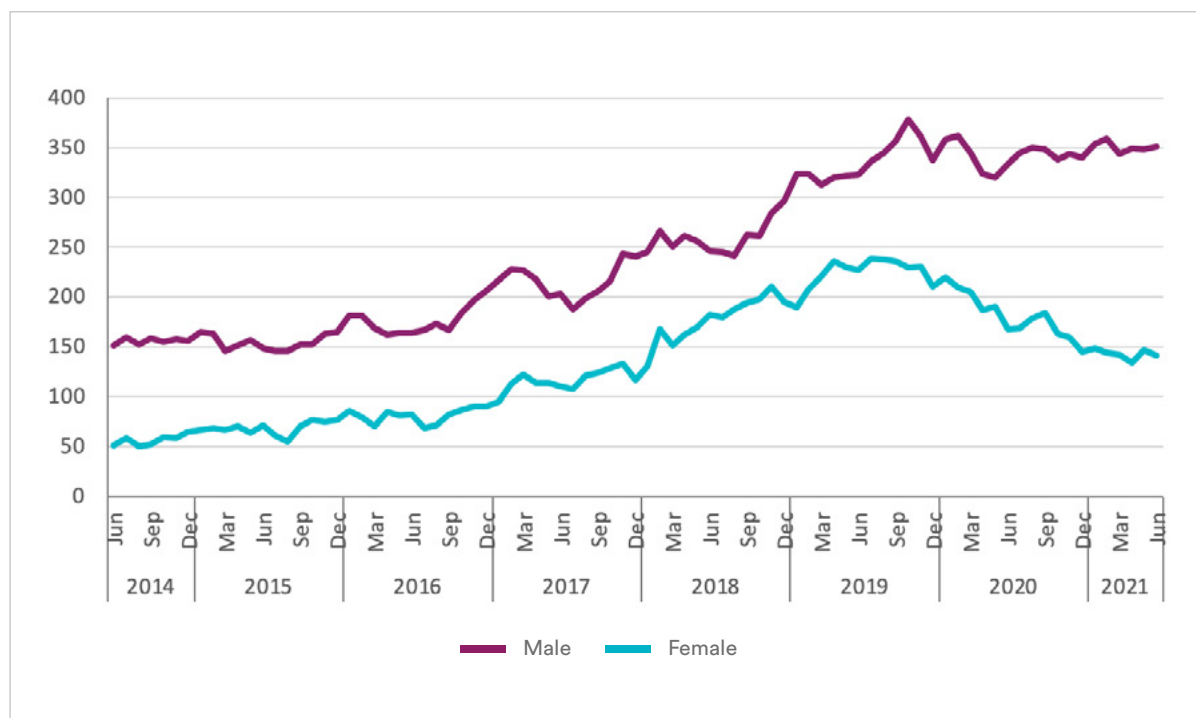
Up to 2017, there was little reliance on PEA in the South-West, with fewer than 100 people in this type of accommodation most months. Since then, the use of STA has declined while PEA increased rapidly, with 68% of people in PEA in June 2021.

The number of people in PEA in the South-West is now over ten times higher than in 2014. By contrast, the number of people in STA/TEA is now 15% lower than in 2014. PEA tends to be predominantly allocated to families, hence the increase in the numbers here as family homelessness increased up to late 2019, as shown in Figure 5. However, while the number of families in emergency accommodation has declined since then, the use of PEA remains high, suggesting that this type of accommodation is now being used for all households.

Figure 9: Age Profile

25–44-year-olds make up the majority of the number of adults in emergency accommodation in the South-West, accounting for between 50–60%. The next largest group is 45–64-year-olds (25–30%), followed by young adults aged 18–24 (15%). People aged over 65 years are just 5% of all adults in emergency accommodation.

All age groups have seen an increase in homelessness over the past seven years. However, amid the overall decline in the number of adults in emergency accommodation in the South-West since 2019, the 45–64 age group has increased slightly, by 2% since the start of 2020.

Figure 10: Adults by Gender

As of June 2021, there were 351 adult men in Emergency Accommodation in the South-West and 141 adult women, a ratio of 7:3. This remains a similar level to June 2014, when there were 151 men and 51 women (75:25).

At the peak in October 2019, there were 378 men and 230 women in emergency accommodation in the South-West. Since then, the number of women has fallen faster than the number of men, by 39% compared to 7%. The majority of single parents in homelessness tend to be women, meaning that the fall in family homelessness over this period causes the overall number of women in emergency accommodation to decline.

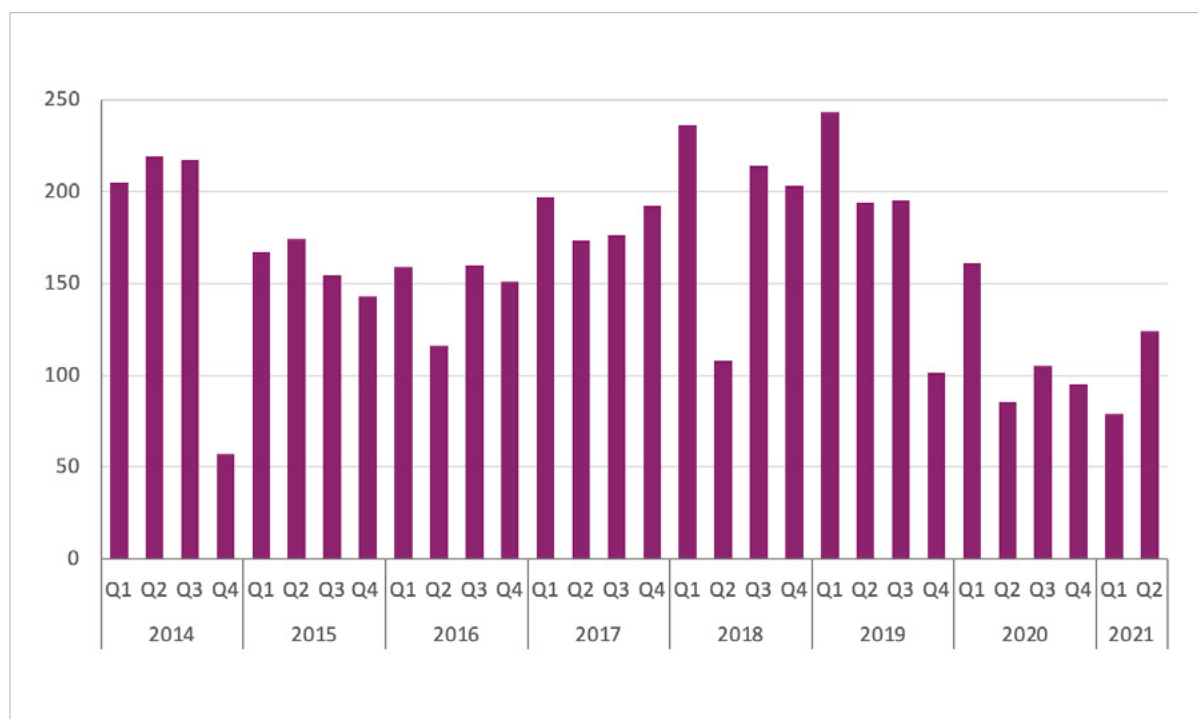
Figure 11: New Presentations

Figure 11 shows the number of adult individuals presenting as homeless to Local Authorities in the South-West and provided with emergency accommodation each quarter since Quarter 1 2014. At its highest, 243 individuals presented as homeless in Q1 2019.

On average in 2020, 8.6 adults presented as homeless each week in the South-West, compared to 13.4 per week in 2015. To date in 2021, 203 adults have presented as homeless, or almost 8 per week.

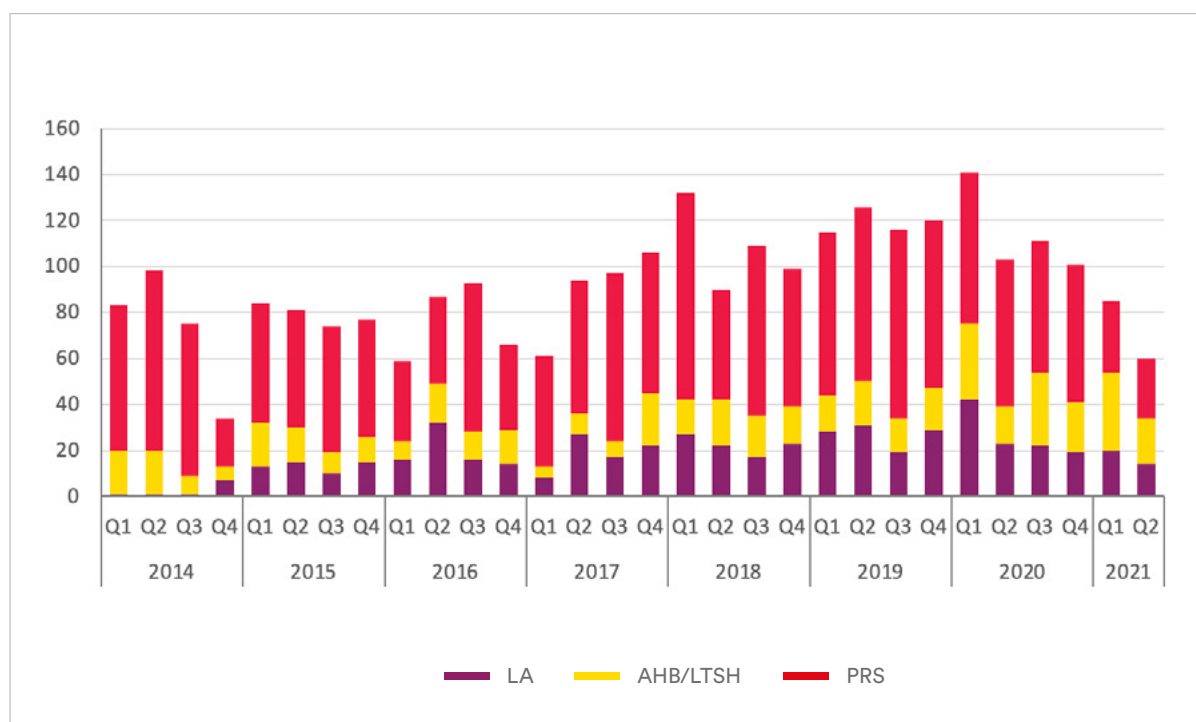
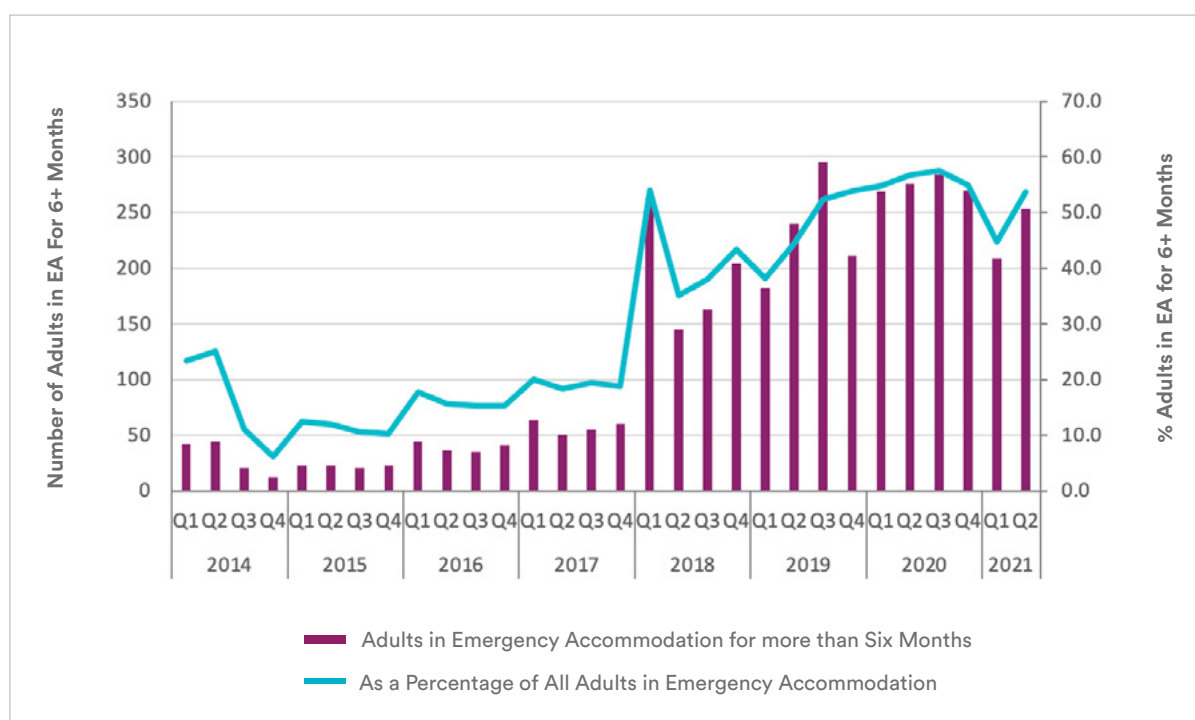
Figure 12: Adult Exits to Housing

Figure 12 presents the number of adults exiting emergency accommodation in the South-West each quarter and their destination. LA is 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.

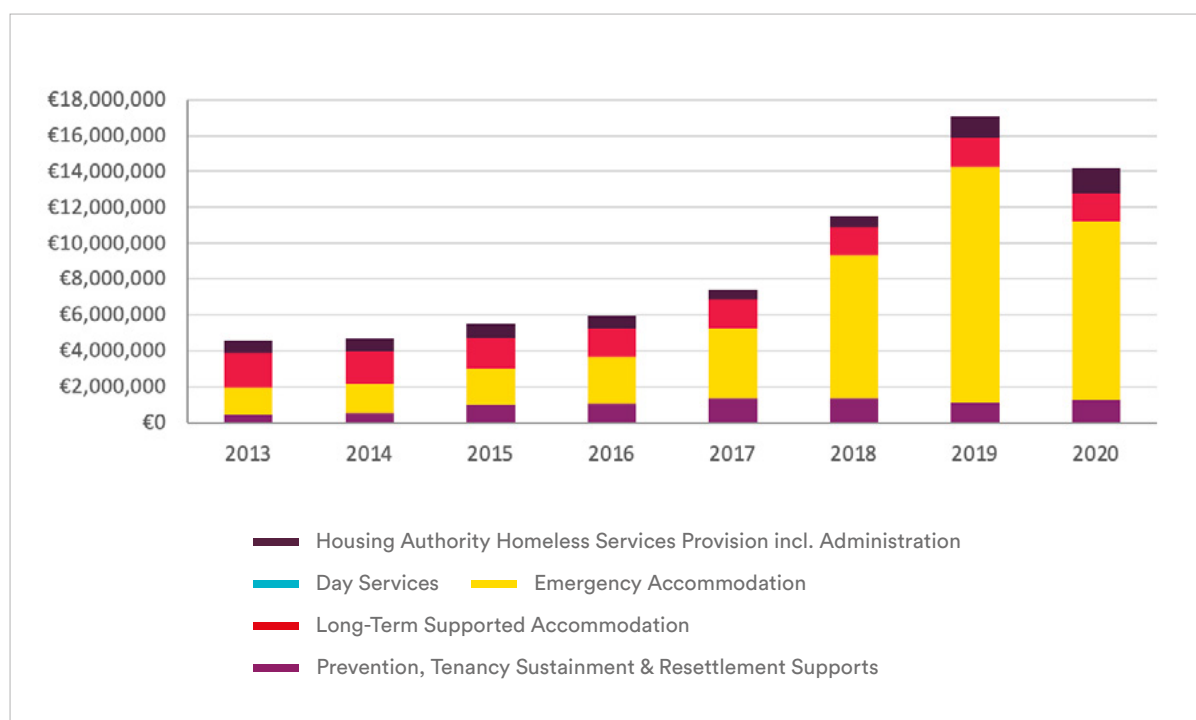
The highest number of exits in one quarter was 141 in Q1 2020. When compared with the data on presentations in Figure 11, there have been five quarters since 2014 where more people exited emergency accommodation than presented as homeless, all since 2019.

Overall during the period Q1 2014 – Q2 2021, there were 2,777 adult exits from emergency accommodation to housing in the South-West: 62% to the PRS, 18% to AHB housing and 20% 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. 54% of all homeless adults in the South-West have now been in emergency accommodation for over 6 months.

The number of adults experiencing long-term homelessness in the South-West is now over six times higher than in 2014, and as of June 2021 stands at 254.

Figure 14: Section 10 Expenditure

Actual expenditure by central (DHLGH) and local government on services for households experiencing homelessness in the South-West increased from €4.59 million in 2013 to €14.22 million in 2020. The South-West expects to spend €17.2 million in 2021.

In 2020, expenditure on emergency accommodation in the South-West was €9.94 million, or 70% of total annual expenditure. LTSA accounted for 11%, Housing Authority services for 10% and Prevention accounted for 9%. While Day Services is one of the categories reported, there has been no expenditure on Day Services during this period.

Emergency accommodation has been the biggest category of expenditure in the South-West since 2015, and is now over six times higher than in 2013. Between 2013 and 2019, 60% of total expenditure in the South-West was on emergency accommodation. LTSA is the only category where expenditure has decreased since 2013, falling by 19%.

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ISBN: 978-1-9996896-4-3

Publication date: August 2021

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