



# Focus on Homelessness

The Mid-West: Clare and Limerick

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Challenging homelessness. Changing lives.

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Ireland

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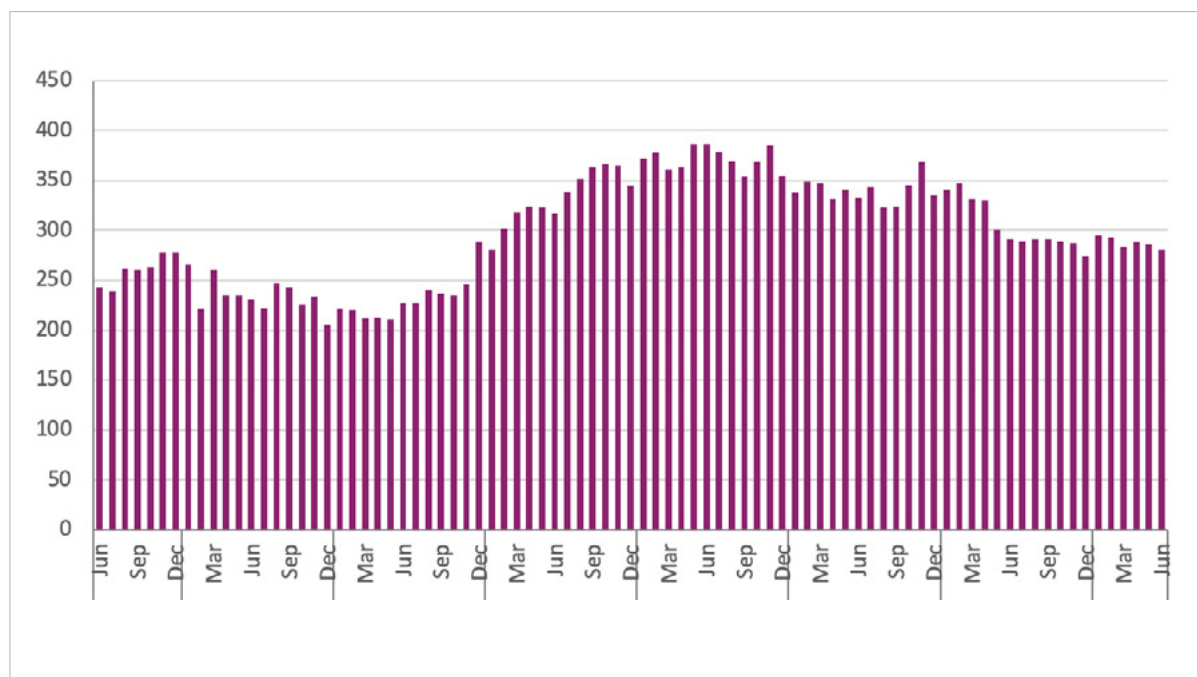
## Introduction

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 Mid-West of Ireland. The Mid-West refers here to counties Clare and Limerick.

<sup>1</sup> 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).

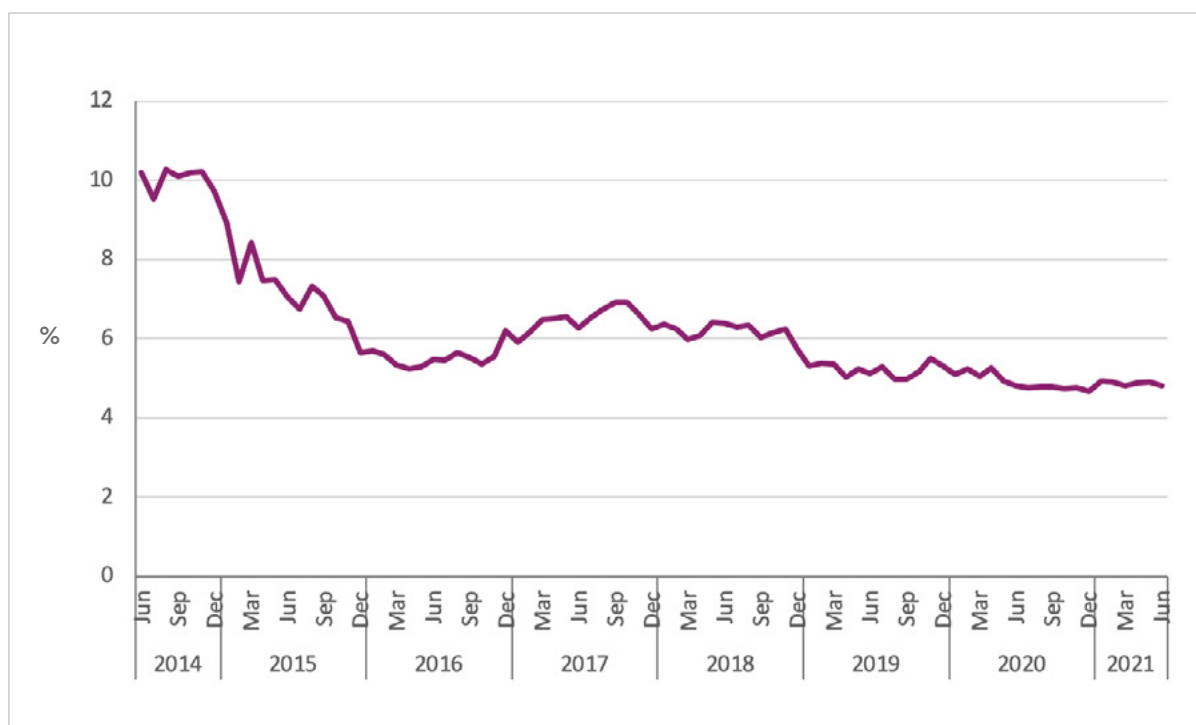
**Figure 1: Adults in Emergency Accommodation**

As of June 2021, there were 281 adults in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West, an increase of 16% since 2014. Compared to other regions, the Mid-West had a higher rate of homelessness at the beginning of this series in 2014. When these figures were first published in June 2014, there were 243 adults in emergency accommodation in this region.

The peak was 386 adults in May and June 2018. Since this point, there has been a gradual decline.

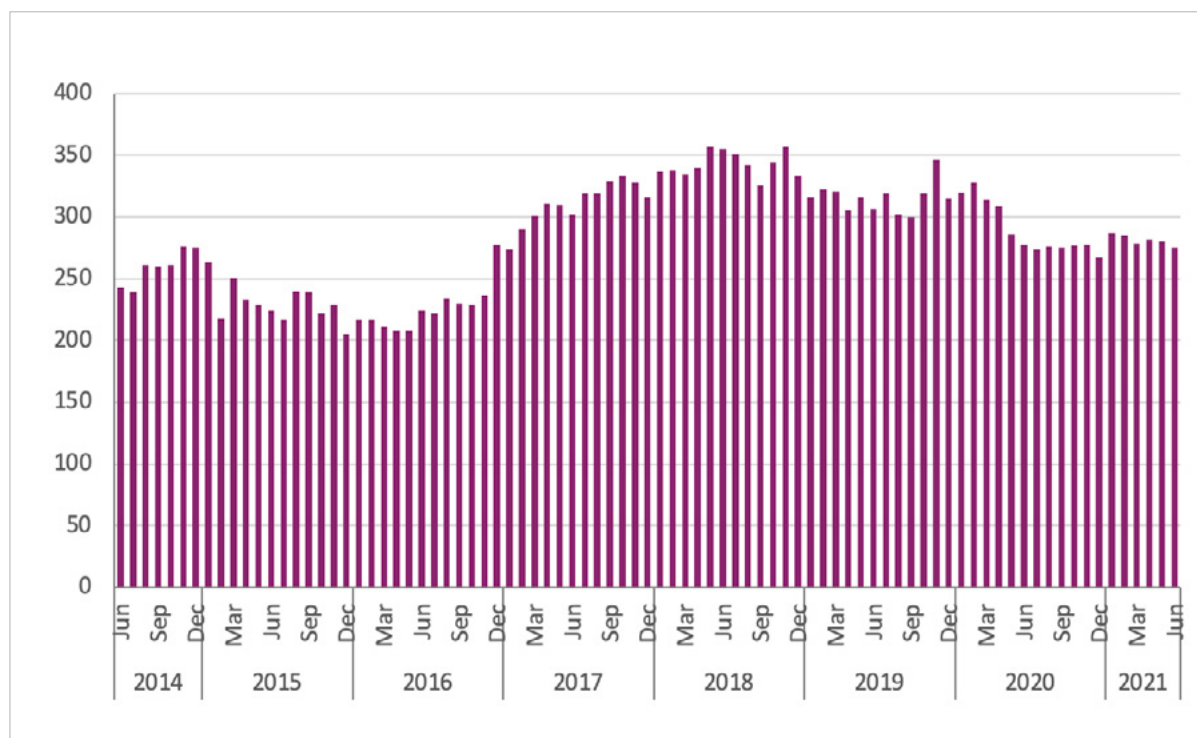
Breaking this down by county, the majority of adults in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West are in Limerick, which contains the largest city in the region. However, Clare has seen a large increase over this period, from 17 adults in emergency accommodation in June 2014 to 63 in 2021.

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 Mid-West to the overall national figure, Figure 2 shows that the Mid-West accounts for around 5-6% of all adults in emergency accommodation on average. However at the beginning of this series, 10% of all adults in emergency accommodation in Ireland were in the Mid-West. This fell sharply during 2015 as many other regions saw a sharp rise in homelessness.

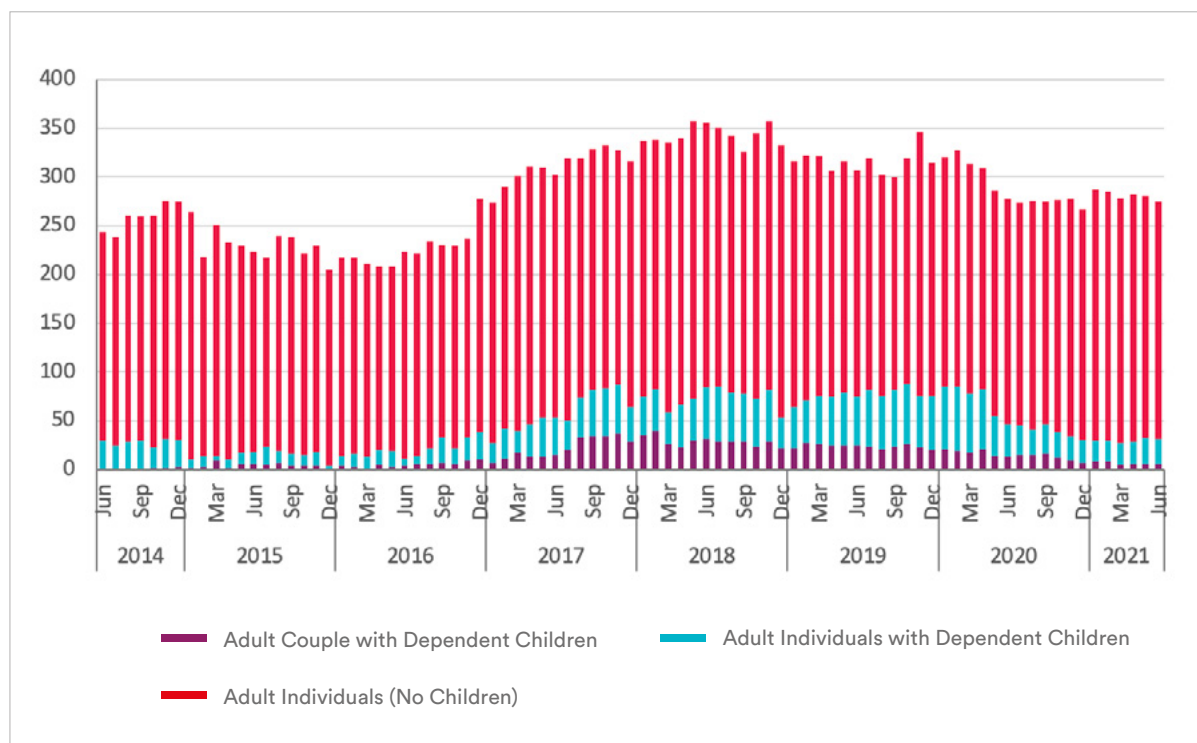
### Figure 3: Households in Emergency Accommodation



The number of households in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West reached a peak of 357 households in May and November 2018. Since then, it has fallen by 23% and as of June 2021, there were 275 households in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West.

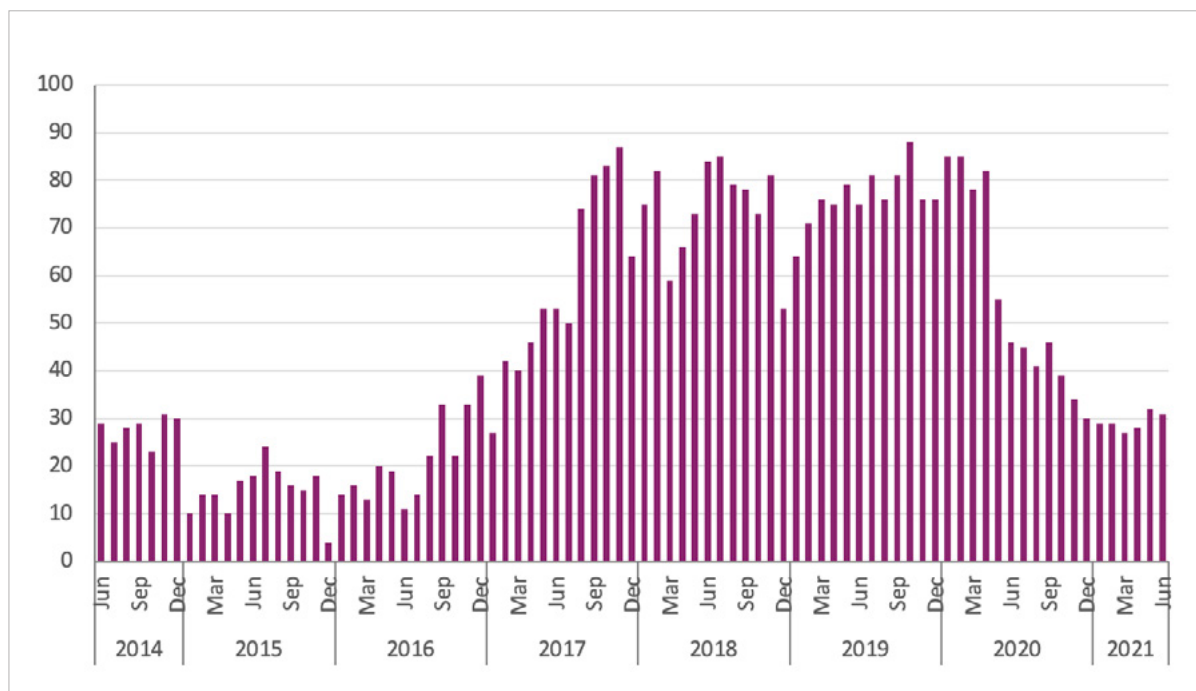
Presenting the scale of homelessness in terms of the number of households affected shifts the focus towards providing solutions to homelessness, which are homes. This gives the clearest indication of the number of dwellings required to meet the needs of households currently in emergency accommodation.

### Figure 4: Household Type



Adult individuals without accompanying children (often referred to as single homelessness) make up the majority of households experiencing homelessness in the Mid-West. Of the 275 households in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West in June 2021, 89% were adult individuals without accompanying children and just 11% were households with children. Of the households with accompanying children, the majority are single-parent families.

As Figure 4 shows, the number of households with children in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West has declined sharply since April 2020, falling by 62%. As of June 2021, there are 25 single parent households in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West, 6 two-parent families and 244 adult individuals.

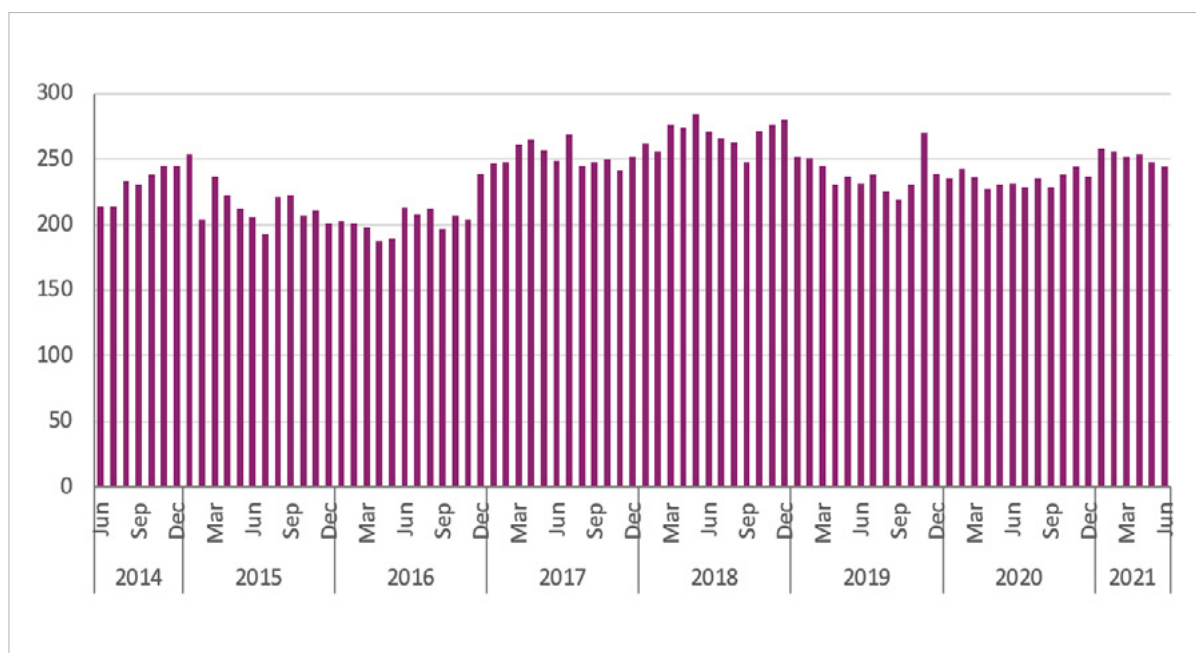
**Figure 5: Families in Emergency Accommodation**

The number of families in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West is currently at a similar level to in 2014. For the first six months of 2021, there has been between 27 and 32 families in emergency accommodation.

After falling during 2015, the number of families began to rise quickly and doubled each year from 2016-2017. This reached a peak of 88 families in October 2019. Since March 2020, there has been a sharp drop in family homelessness nationally, with the number of families in the Mid-West falling by 60% in this period. However as Figure 5 shows, this is slowly starting to increase again.

As of June 2021, there are 31 families in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West.

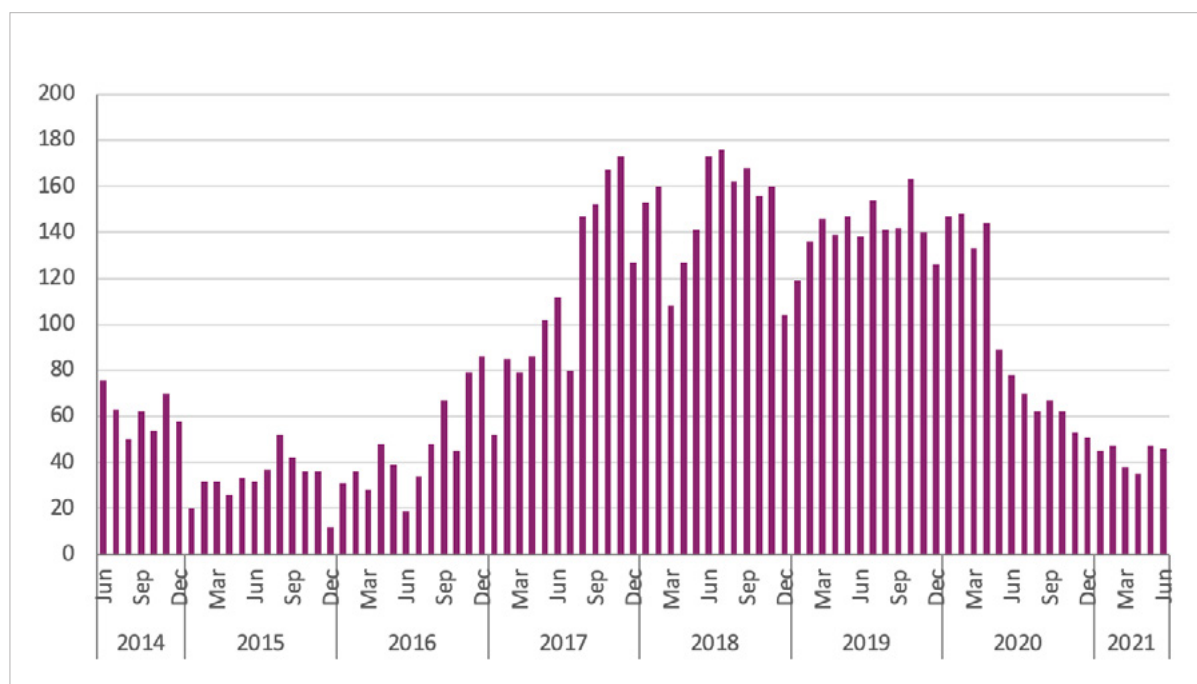


**Figure 6: Adult-Only Households**

Adult-only households are either single adult individuals or adults in couples without accompanying children. As shown in Figure 6, these households have followed a very different pattern to the households with children in Figure 5.

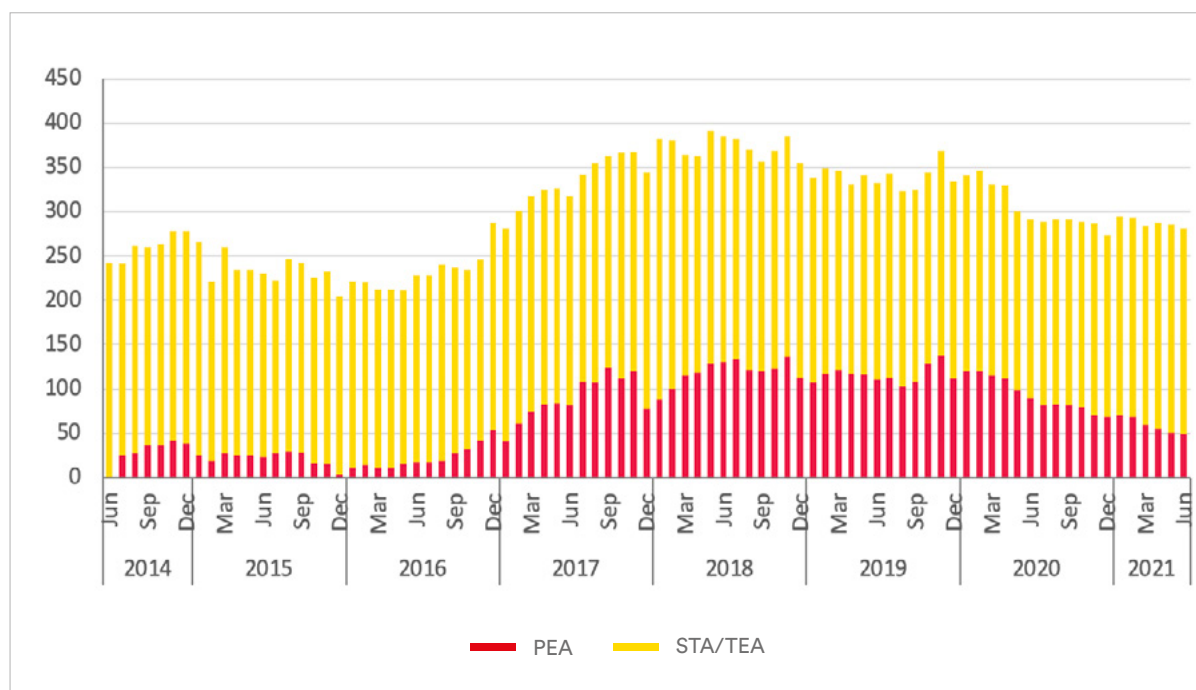
As discussed under Figure 1, the Mid-West had a high number of adults in emergency accommodation when this data was first published in 2014 and this has remained at a more stable level than in many other regions, which have seen sharp rises from low levels of homelessness in 2014. Figure 6 shows that this pattern has been largely driven by fairly consistent levels of adult-only households, remaining between 188 and 284 households since 2014.

The highest monthly number recorded was 284 in May 2018, and as of June 2021, there are 244 adult-only households in emergency accommodation in the Mid-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. In the Mid-West, there were 46 children in emergency accommodation in June 2021. This is a decrease of 39% since June 2014, when there were 76.

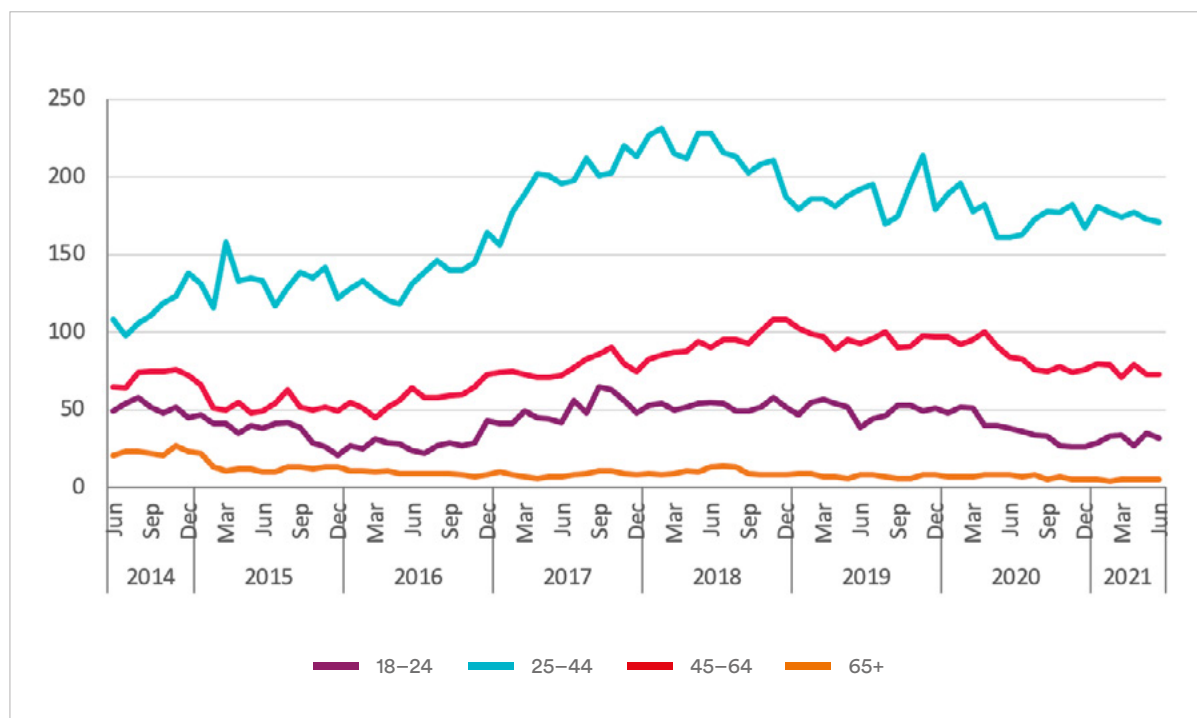
The highest number was reached in July 2018, with 176 children in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West. Since early 2020, there has been a sharp drop in the number of children in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West, falling by 68% since April 2020.

**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 Mid-West, the number of TEA is very low and so has been combined with STA.

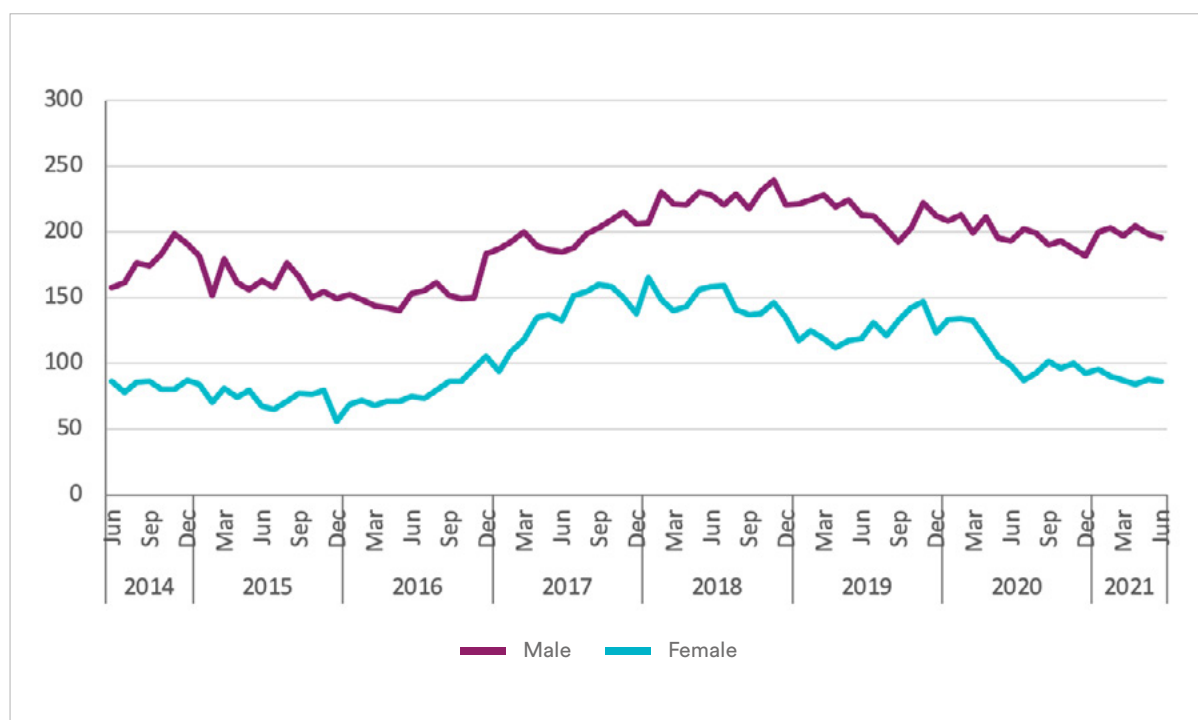
STA/TEA has remained the most common type of emergency accommodation throughout the period shown in Figure 8. Up to 2017, there was very low reliance on PEA, accounting for less than 20% of the accommodation used. From 2017 on, PEA accounted for up to 37% of emergency accommodation, but has since declined again to an average of 20% in 2021 to date. PEA tends to be predominantly allocated to families, hence the pattern shown here follows that of family homelessness in the Mid-West, as shown in Figure 5.

The number of people in STA/TEA has remained very steady throughout this period, standing at 243 in June 2014 and 231 as of June 2021.

**Figure 9: Age Profile**

25–44-year-olds make up the majority of the number of adults in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West, at 61%. The next largest group is 45–64-year-olds (26%), followed by young adults aged 18–24 (11%). People aged over 65 years are just 2% of all adults in emergency accommodation.

The youngest and oldest age groups represented above have seen overall declines since 2014, whereas there has been an increase in the number of 25–64-year-olds in emergency accommodation. The largest rise has been among 25–44-year-olds, with a 58% increase since June 2014. Since the total number of adults in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West began to fall in late 2018, the biggest decrease has been among the youngest group, falling by 45% since November 2018.

**Figure 10: Adults by Gender**

As of June 2021, there are 195 adult men in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West and 86 adult women, a ratio of 70:30. In June 2014, there was a slightly higher proportion of women, with a 65:35 split.

At the peak in May/June 2018, there were 228 men and 158 women in emergency accommodation in the Mid-West. Since then, the number of women has fallen faster than the number of men, by 46% compared to 14%. The majority of single parents in homelessness tend to be women, meaning that the fall in family homelessness during 2020-2021 coincides with a fall in the overall number of women in emergency accommodation.

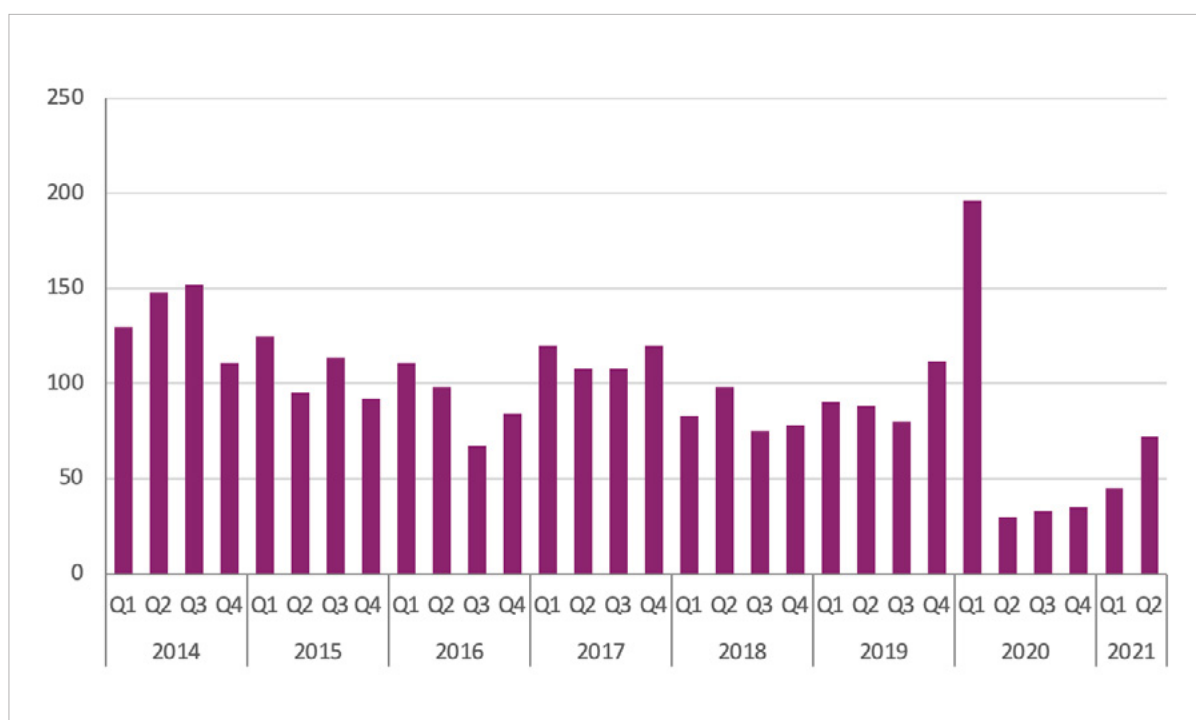
**Figure 11: New Presentations**

Figure 11 shows the number of adult individuals presenting as homeless to Local Authorities in the Mid-West and provided with emergency accommodation in each quarter since Quarter 1 2014. At its highest, 196 individuals presented as homeless in Q1 2020. On average in 2020, 5.7 individuals presented as homeless each week in the Mid-West, compared to 10.4 per week in 2014. To date in 2021, 4.5 people have presented as homeless each week.

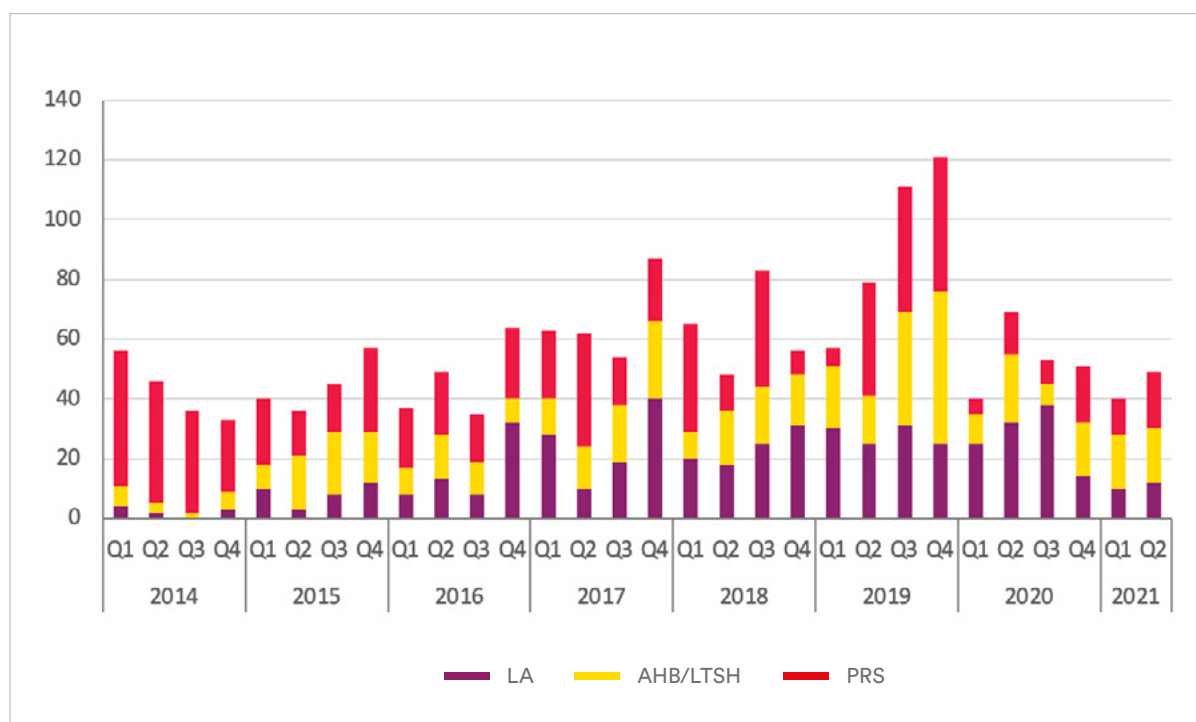
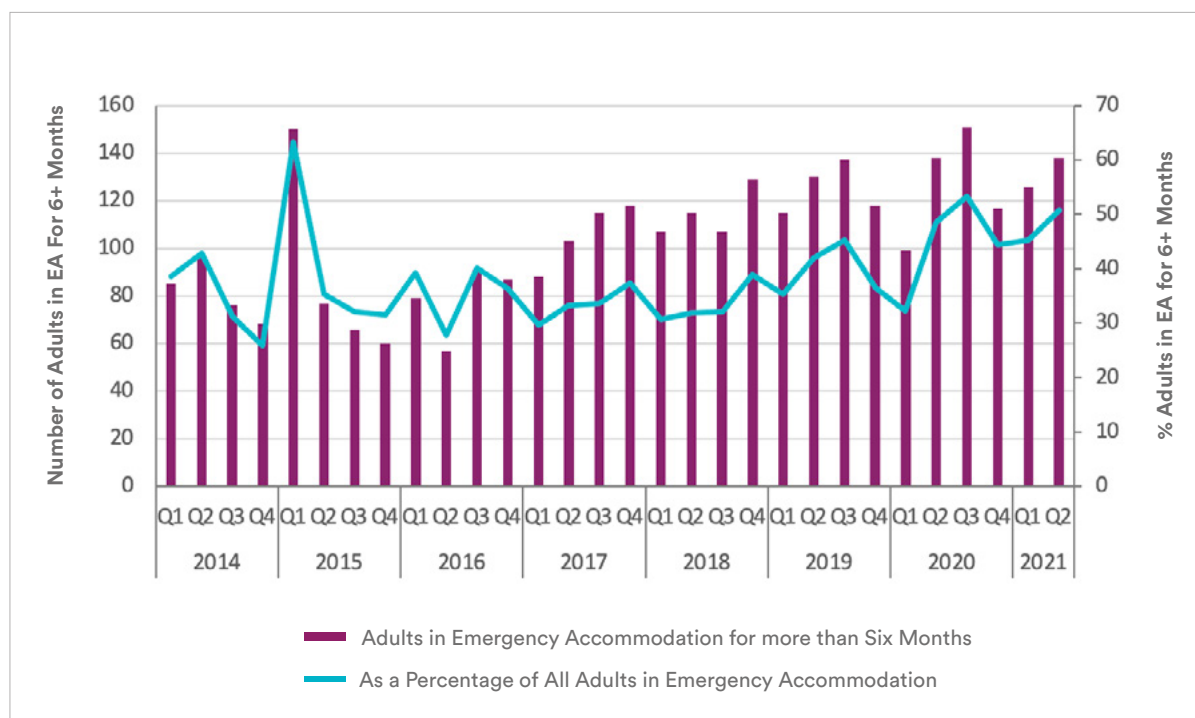
**Figure 12: Adult Exits to Housing**

Figure 12 presents the number of adults exiting emergency accommodation to housing in the Mid-West each quarter. 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 in Q4 2019. When compared with the data on presentations in Figure 11, there have been 6 quarters since 2014 where more people exited emergency accommodation than presented as homeless. All of these have been since late 2017.

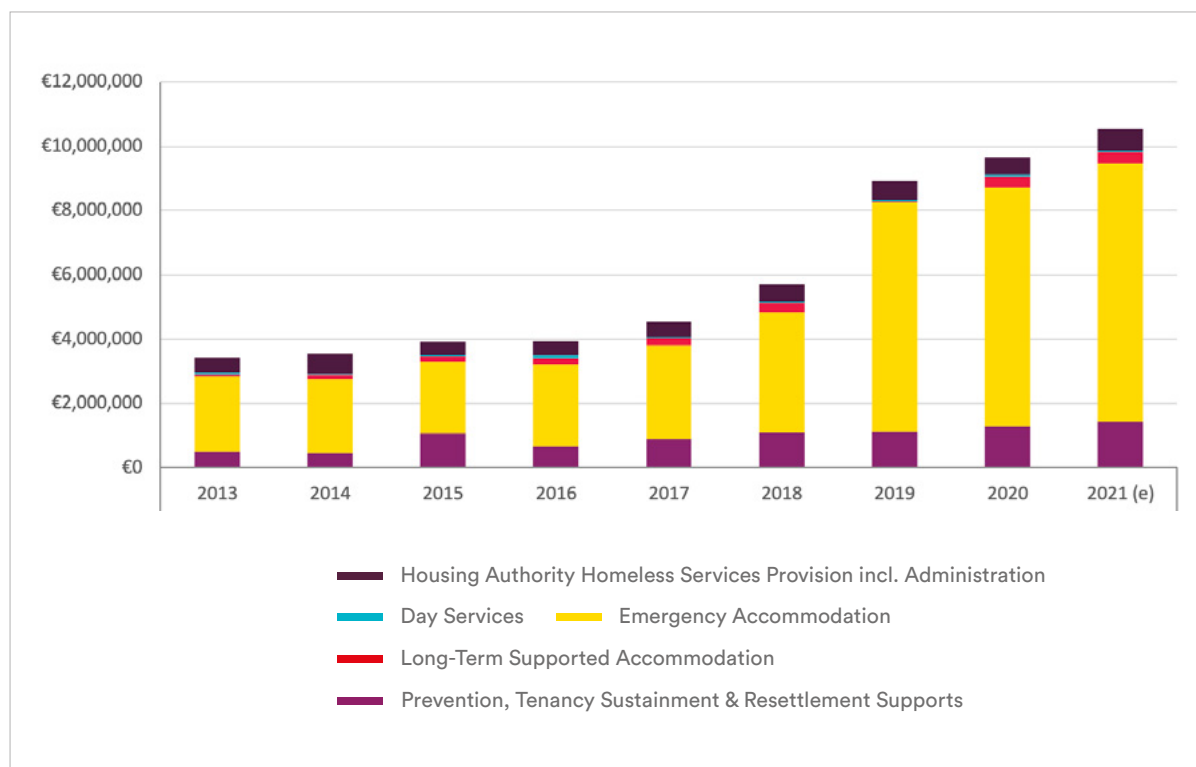
Overall during the period Q1 2014 – Q2 2021, there were 1,722 adult exits from emergency accommodation to housing in the Mid-West: 41% to the PRS, 28% to AHB housing and 31% to Local Authority housing.

**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. As of June 2021, 51% of all homeless adults in the Mid-West have now been in emergency accommodation for over 6 months. This reached its highest point in Q1 2015, at 63%.

Despite the decline in the overall number of adults in emergency accommodation over the past two years, the proportion who are spending long periods in emergency accommodation continues to increase. The number of adults experiencing long-term homelessness in the Mid-West has increased by 62% since 2014, and in Q2 2021 there were 138 adults in emergency accommodation for over 6 months.



**Figure 14: Section 10 Expenditure**

Actual expenditure by central (DHLGH) and local government on services for households experiencing homelessness in the Mid-West increased from €3.4 million in 2013 to €9.7 million in 2020. The Mid-West estimates that it will expend €10.5 million in 2021. Overall between 2013 and 2020, €43.6 million has been spent on services for households experiencing homelessness in the region.

In 2020, expenditure on emergency accommodation in the Mid-West was €7.4 million, or 77% of total expenditure. Prevention accounted for 13%, Housing Authority services for 5.5%, LTSA for 3.5% and Day Services for 0.6%.

Between 2013 and 2020, 70% of total expenditure in the Mid-West was on emergency accommodation. Long-term supported accommodation is the category which has seen the biggest increase, with over eight times as much spent on LTSA in 2020 as in 2014. Day services are the only category to have seen a decrease in expenditure over this period, with a decline of 12%.

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