



Focus on Homelessness

The North-West: Donegal, Leitrim
and Sligo

Eoin O'Sullivan
Aisling Reidy
Mike Allen

Challenging homelessness. Changing lives.

FOCUS
Ireland

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Figure 1: Adults in Emergency Accommodation	4
Figure 2: Adults in the Region as a Percent of all Adults in Emergency Accommodation	5
Figure 3: Households in Emergency Accommodation	6
Figure 4: Household Type	7
Figure 5: Families in Emergency Accommodation	8
Figure 6: Adult-Only Households.....	9
Figure 7: Child Dependants.....	10
Figure 8: Accommodation Type	11
Figure 9: Age Profile.....	12
Figure 10: Adults by Gender.....	13
Figure 11: New Presentations	14
Figure 12: Adult Exits to Housing	15
Figure 13: Adults in Emergency Accommodation for Over 6 Months	16
Figure 14: Section 10 Expenditure	17

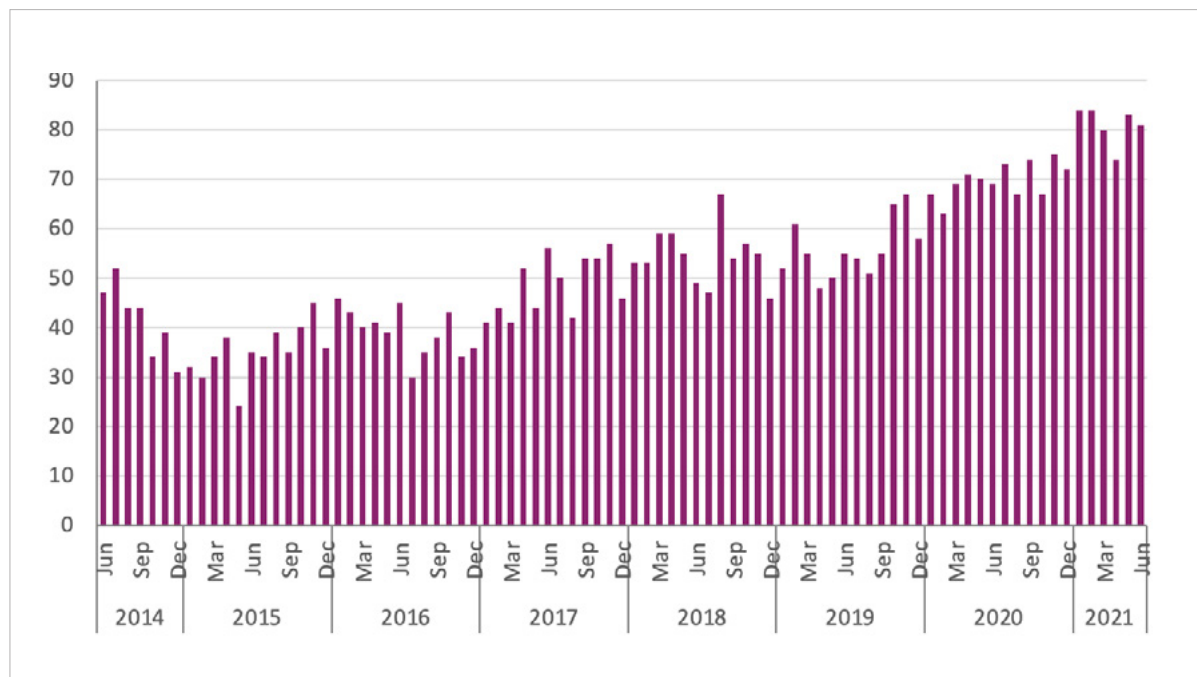
Introduction

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 North-West of Ireland. The North-West refers here to counties Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo

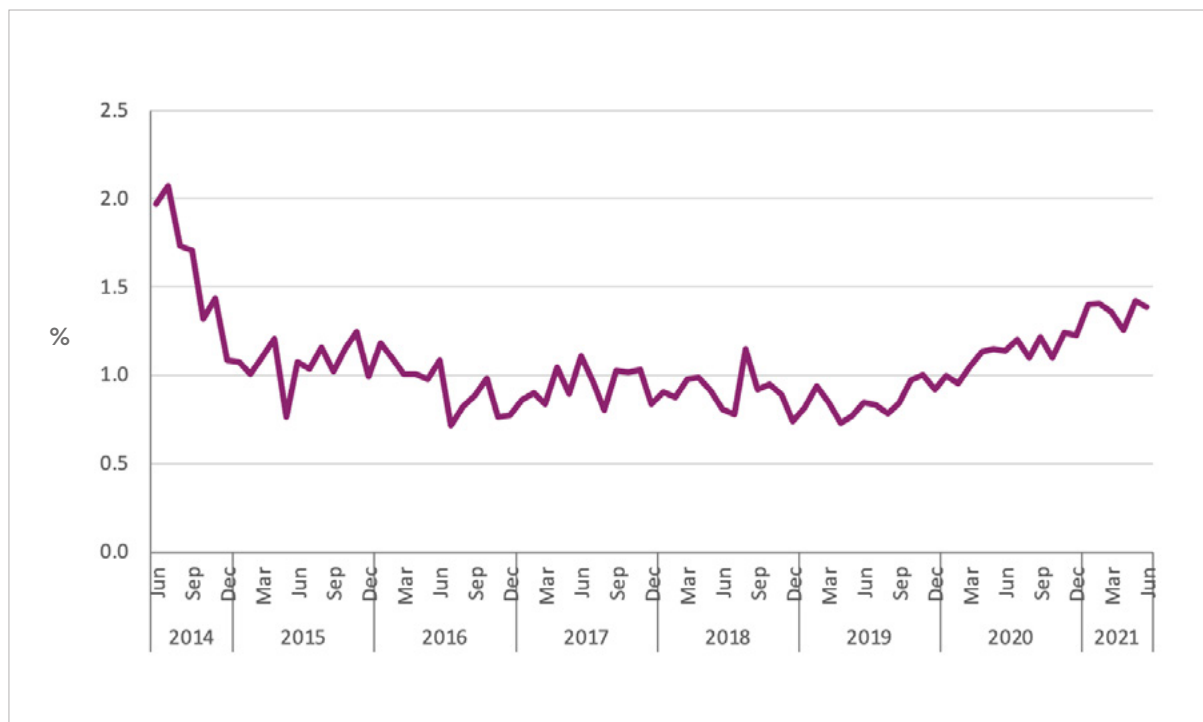
¹ For a more detailed description of these data sources, see Eoin O’Sullivan, Aisling Reidy and Mike Allen (2021) Focus on Homelessness: Significant Developments in Homelessness 2014-2021 (Dublin: Focus Ireland) and Eoin O’Sullivan and Thadee Mustafiri (2020) Public Expenditure on Services for Households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

Figure 1: Adults in Emergency Accommodation

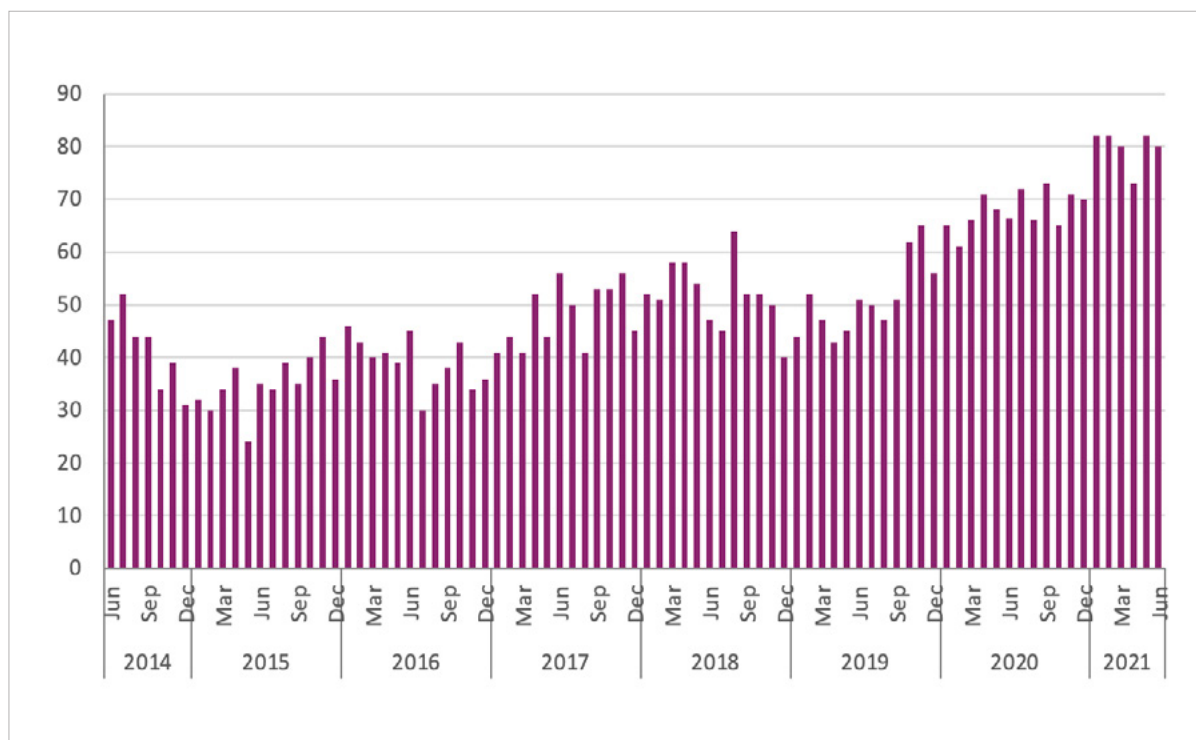
As of June 2021, there were 81 adults in emergency accommodation in the North-West. This has been increasing throughout the past seven years, rising by 72% since June 2014. The highest monthly number of adults in emergency accommodation was 84, in January and February 2021.

Breaking this down by county, the majority of adults in emergency accommodation in the North-West are in Sligo. On average, Sligo accounts for between 50-60% of adults in emergency accommodation in the region. Donegal tends to have remain fairly steady at between 20 and 30 adults in emergency accommodation. Leitrim has the fewest, regularly reporting no adults in emergency accommodation.

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

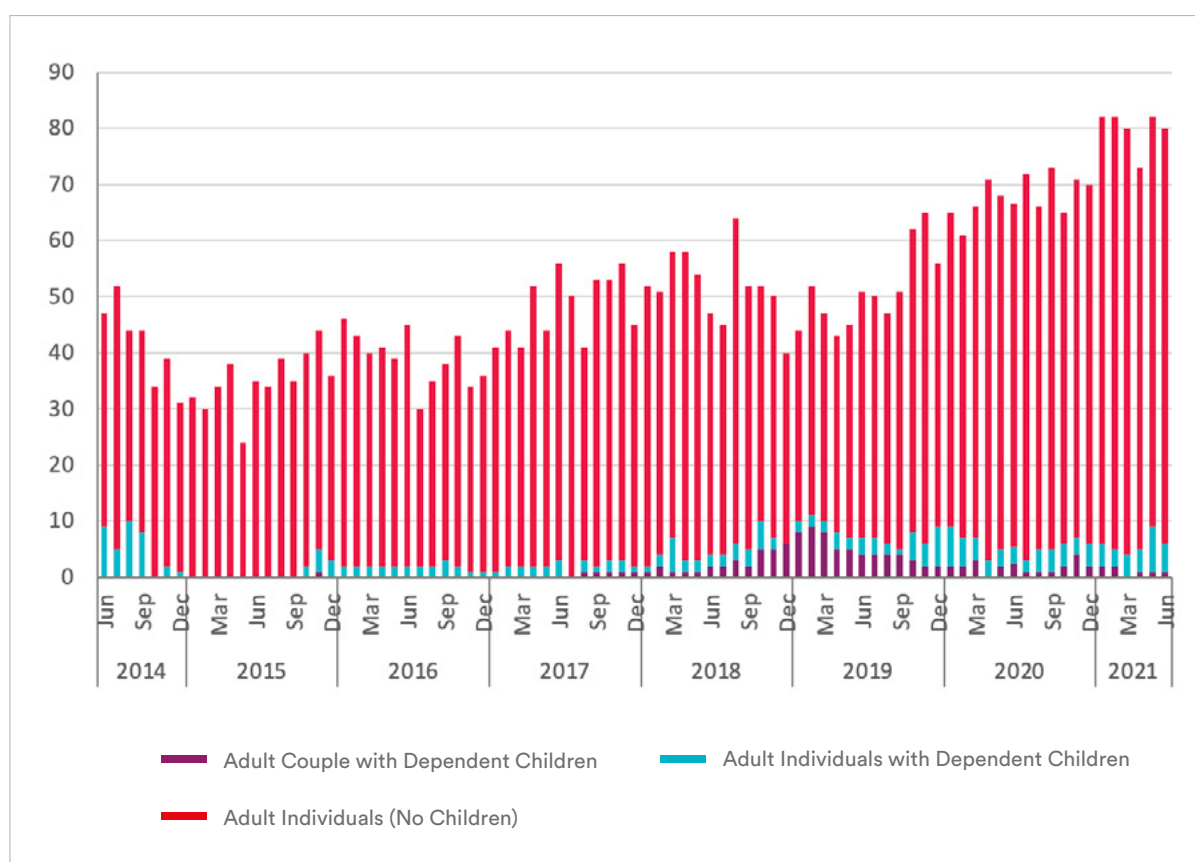
Comparing the North-West to the overall national figure, Figure 2 shows that the region accounts for around 1-1.5% of all adults in emergency accommodation on average. Since the beginning of 2020, this figure has increased as the number of adults in the North-West rose at a faster rate than the national figure.

Figure 3: Households in Emergency Accommodation

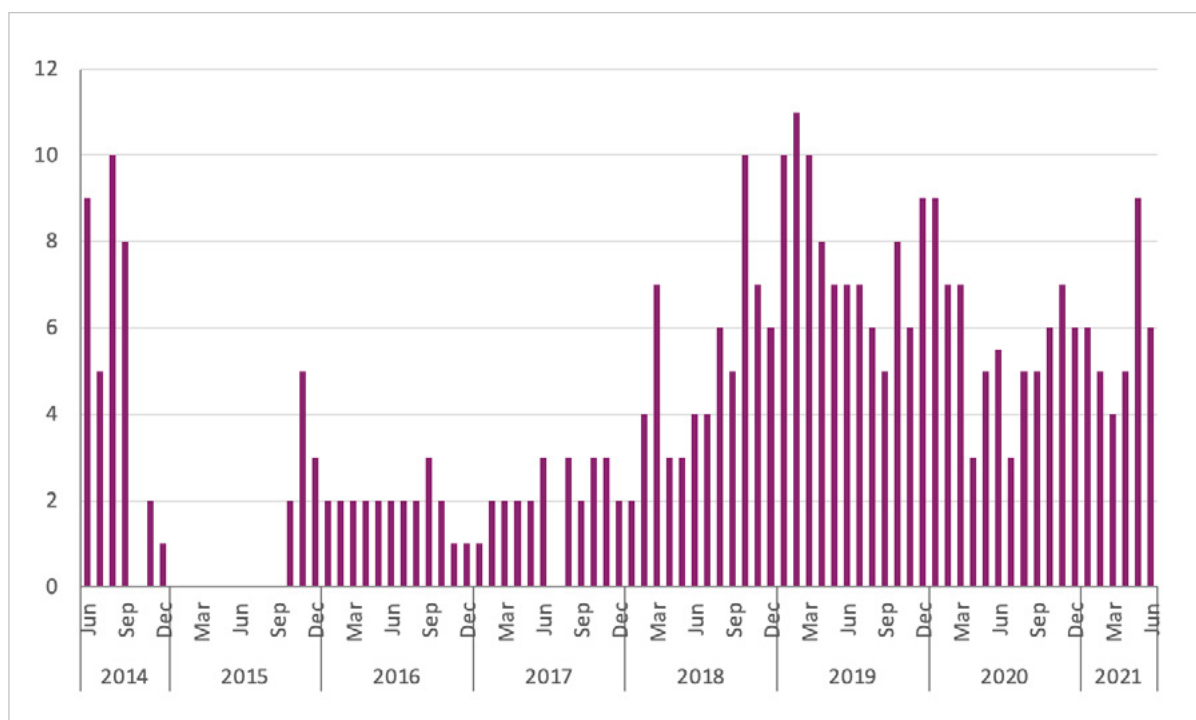
After increasing steadily since 2014, the number of households in emergency accommodation in the North-West reached its highest level in early 2021. Three out of the past six months have seen the highest number of households recorded in the North-West to date, at 82 households.

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 North-West.

As of June 2021, there were 80 households in emergency accommodation in the North-West.

Figure 4: Household Type

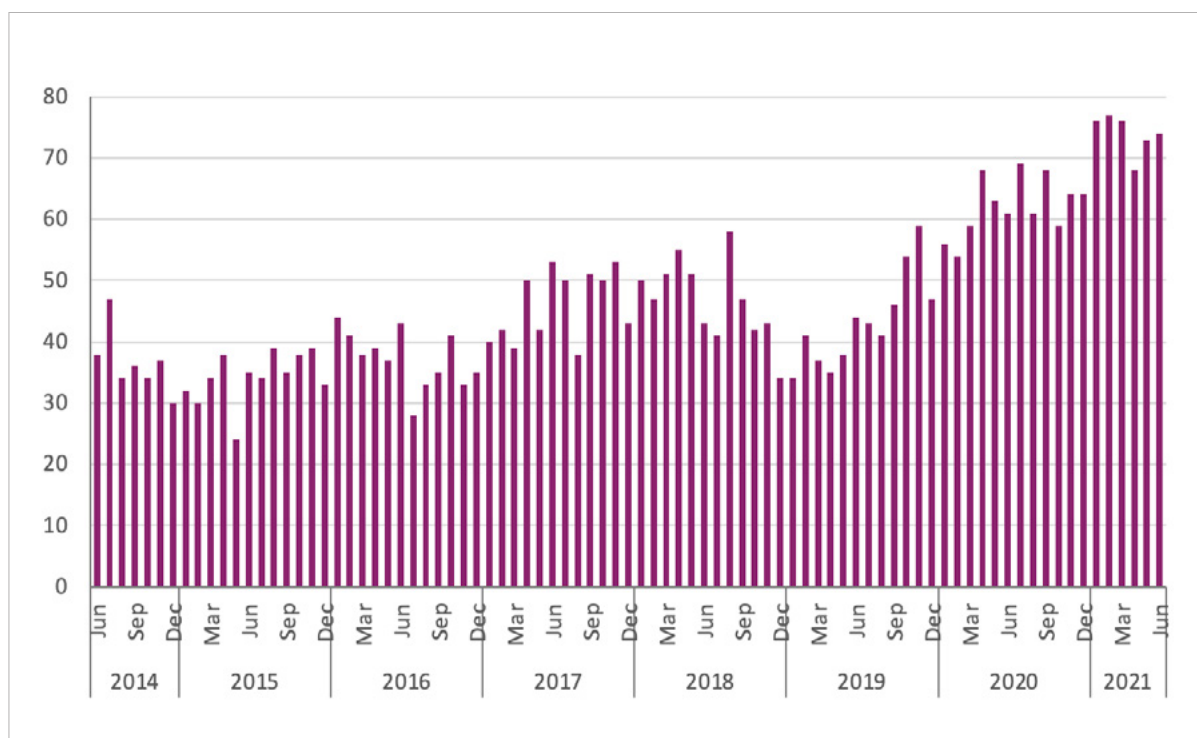
As shown in Figure 4, adult individuals without accompanying children (often referred to as single homelessness) make up the vast majority of households in emergency accommodation in the North-West. Of the 80 households in emergency accommodation in the North-West in June 2021, 93% were adult individuals and 7% were households with children. Of the households with accompanying children, the majority are single-parent families.

Figure 5: Families in Emergency Accommodation

Compared to other regions, the North-West has a very low number of families in emergency accommodation. After falling to zero through most of 2015, 2016-2017 saw an average of two families per month in emergency accommodation, followed by a sharp increase in 2018. At its peak, there were 11 families in February 2019. This has declined since, with an average of six families in Emergency Accommodation per month in 2021 to date.

As of June 2021, there were 6 families in Emergency Accommodation in the North-West.

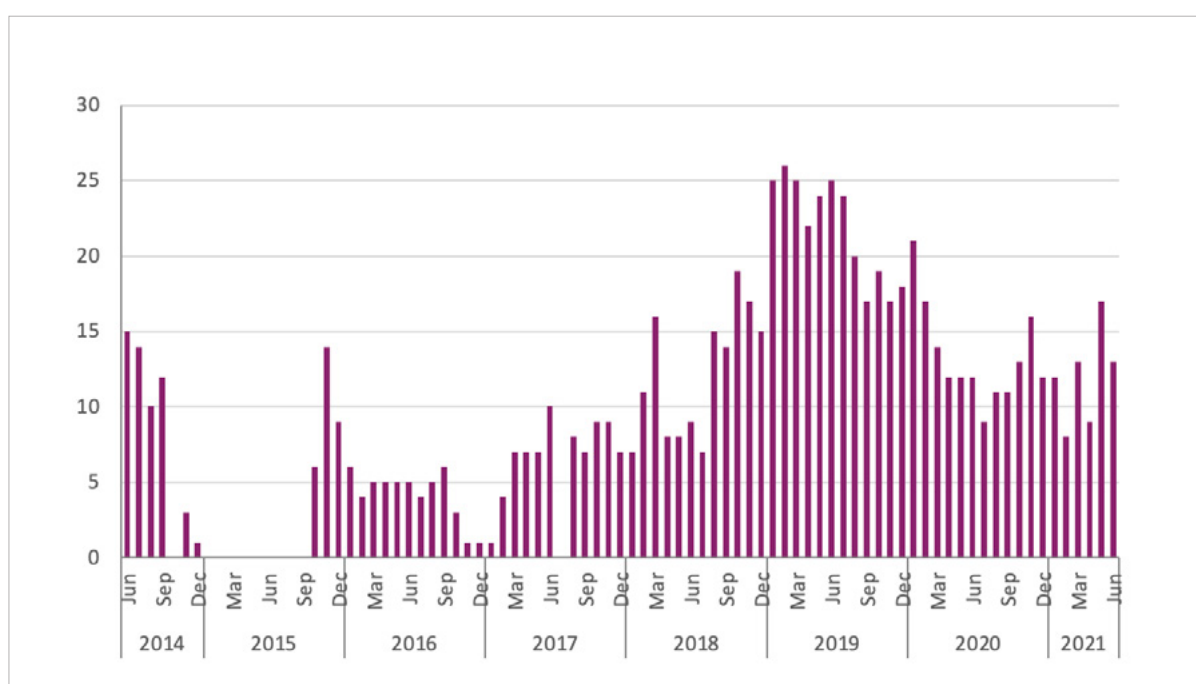
Figure 6: Adult-Only Households



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 completely different pattern to the households with children in Figure 5.

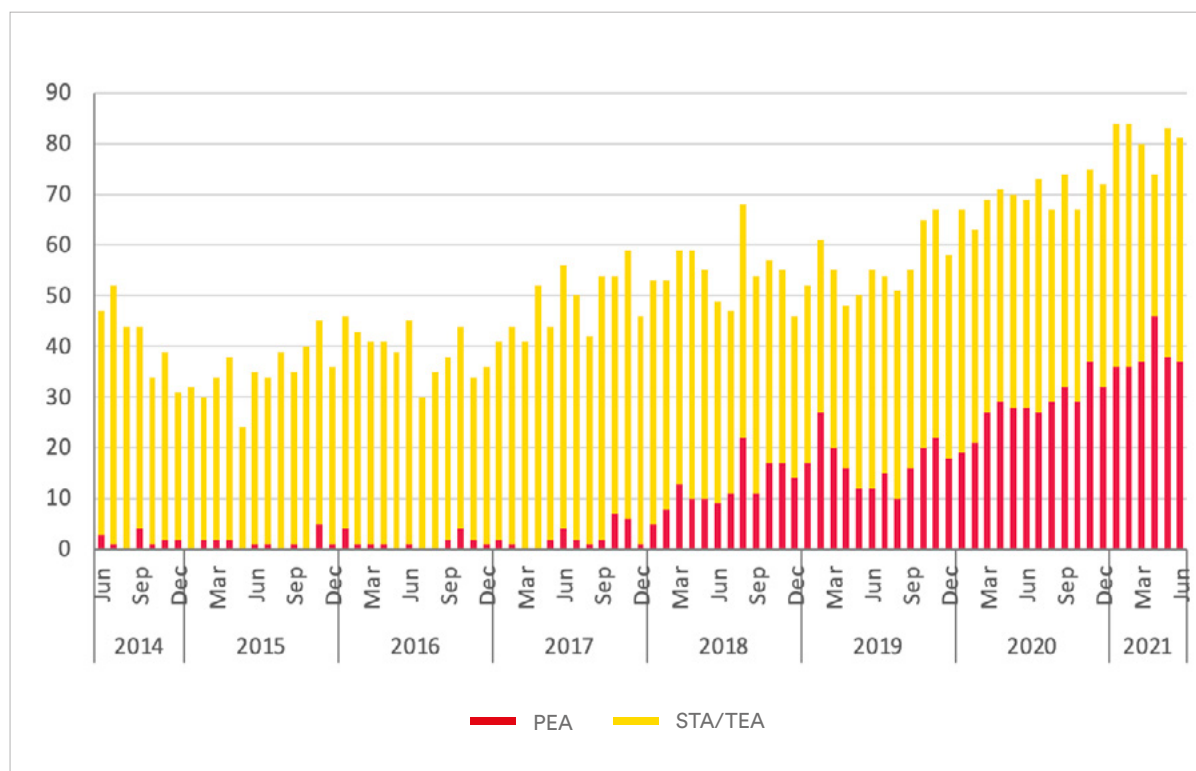
The number of adult-only households in the North-West was slowly increasing since 2014 before dipping during late 2018 and early 2019. It has since rapidly increased, reaching its highest level in February 2021 at 77.

As of June 2021, there are 74 adult-only households in emergency accommodation in the North-West.

Figure 7: Child Dependants

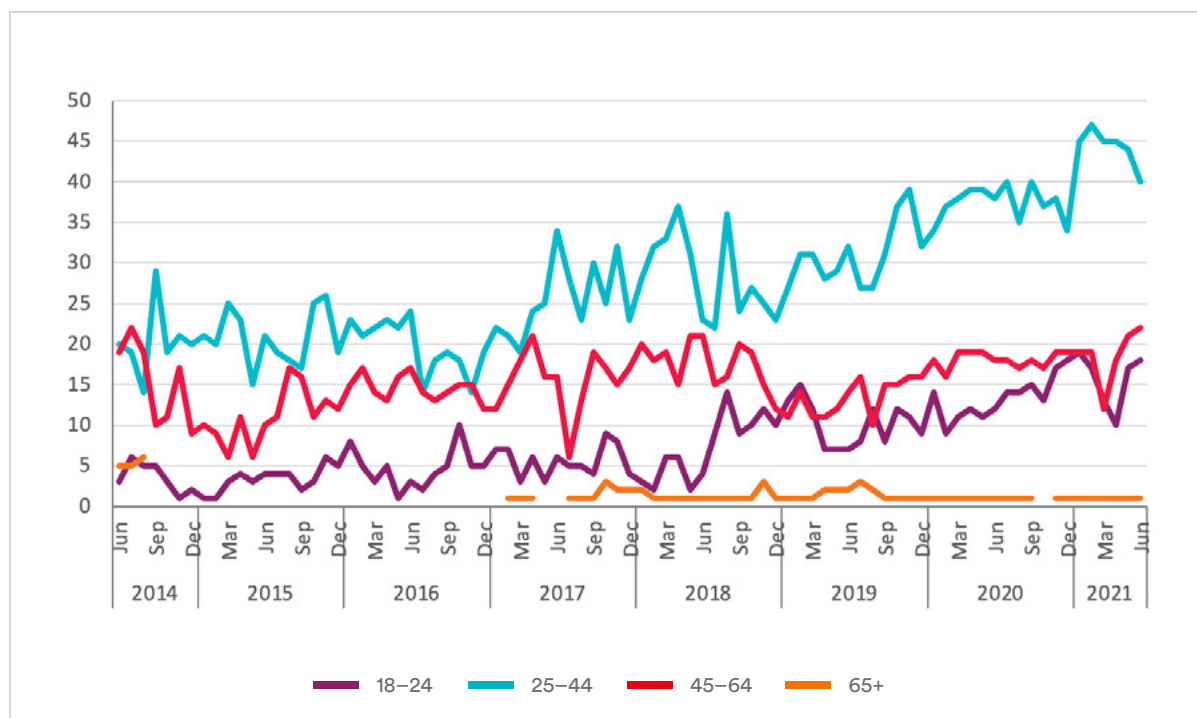
The number of children in emergency accommodation follows the same pattern as the families shown in Figure 5, with 13 children in emergency accommodation in June 2021.

The highest number was reached in February 2019 with 26 children in emergency accommodation in the region.

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

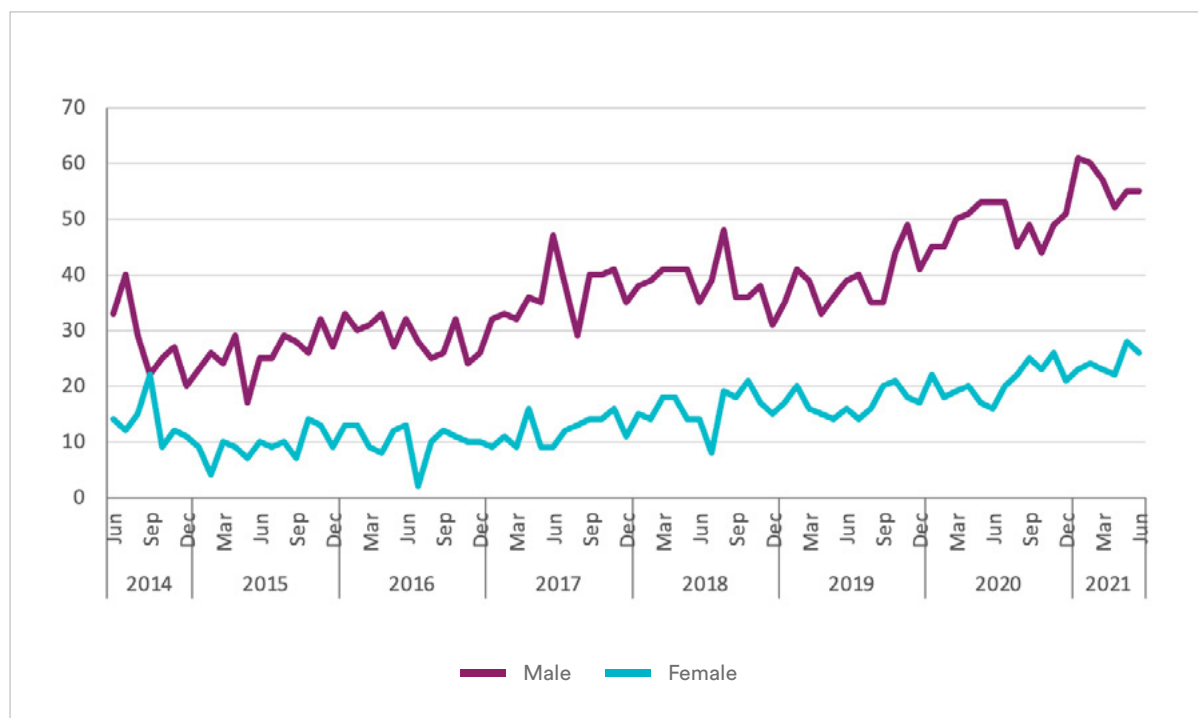
STA/TEA has remained the most common accommodation type used in the North-West throughout the period shown. The level of PEA began to increase from 2018, and since 2020 40-45% of adults are in PEA in the North-West. As of June 2021, the ratio is 46% in PEA compared to 54% in STA/TEA.

Figure 9: Age Profile

25–44-year-olds make up the majority of the number of adults in Emergency Accommodation in the North-West, at around 55%. The next largest group is 45–64-year-olds (25%), followed by young adults aged 18–24 (20%). People aged over 65 years make up 1% of all adults in emergency accommodation.

As can be seen from the broken orange line, the number of over 65s in emergency accommodation in the North-West is very low and often falls to zero. All other age groups have seen a rise in homelessness over the past seven years, with the largest rise has been among 18-24 age group.

² This is likely to be a reporting error, but as this is the published figure, we have include it.

Figure 10: Adults by Gender

As of June 2021, there are 55 adult men in emergency accommodation in the North-West and 26 adult women, a ratio of 68:32. The proportion of men to women in the North-West has remained mostly around a 65:35 split over the period.

Both the number of men and the number of women in emergency accommodation in the North-West are continuing to increase. This differs from the national figures, where the number of women has started to decline since late 2019 and the number of men has remained at roughly the same level since early 2020.

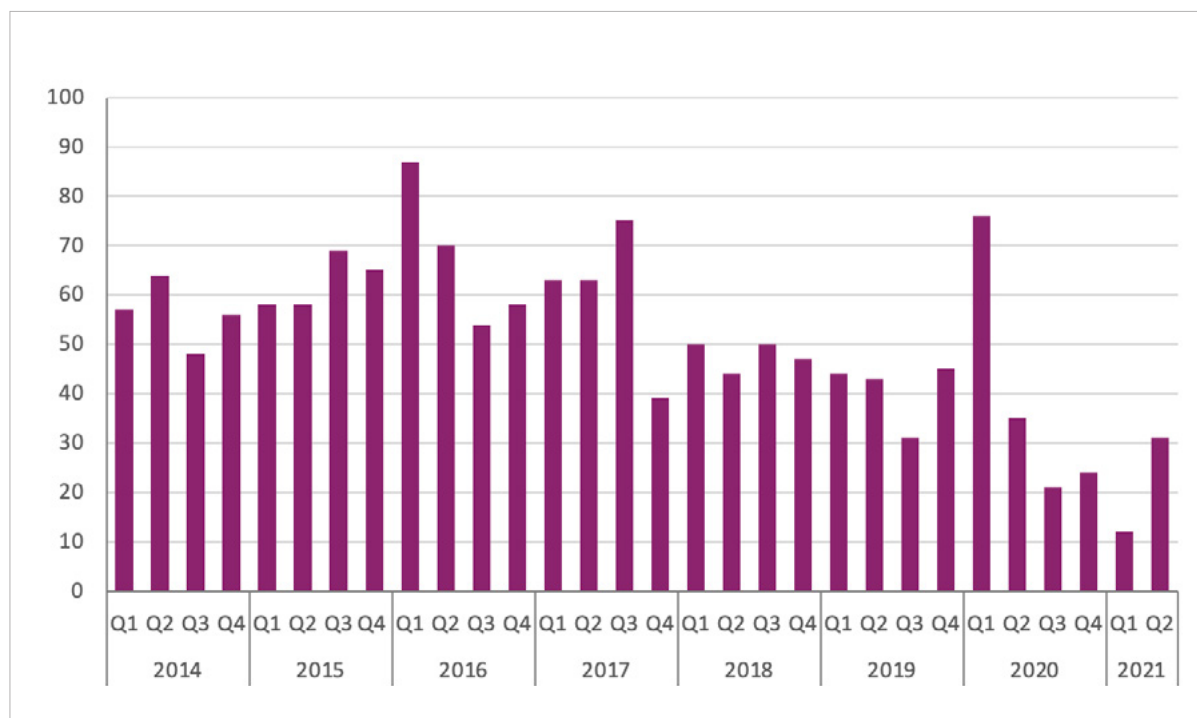
Figure 11: New Presentations

Figure 11 shows the number of new adult individuals presenting as homeless to Local Authorities in the North West and provided with emergency accommodation each quarter since Quarter 1 2014..

At its highest, 87 individuals presented as homeless in Q1 2016. In contrast to the continued rise in the number of adults in emergency accommodation, the number of new presentations has declined over the past few years. This indicates that there are a considerable number of adults in emergency accommodation in the North-West who are either returning to homelessness after short-term exits or have been in emergency accommodation for a long period.

On average in 2020, 3 individuals presented as homeless each week in the North-West, compared to 4.3 per day in 2014.

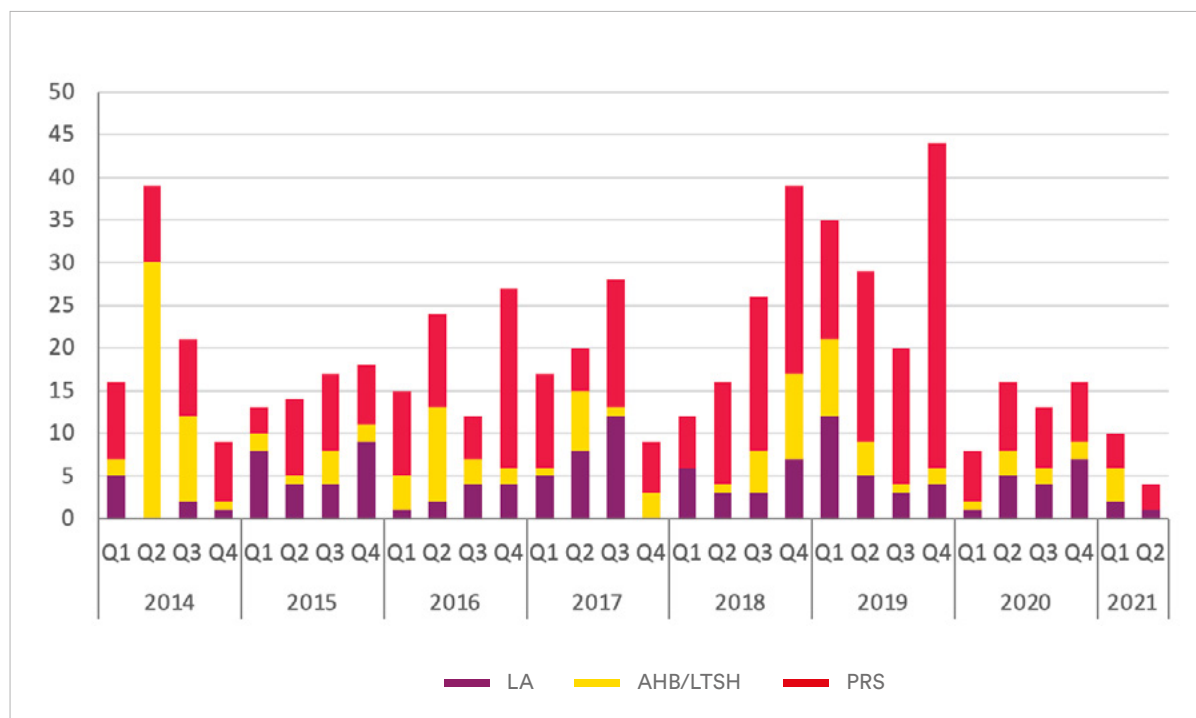
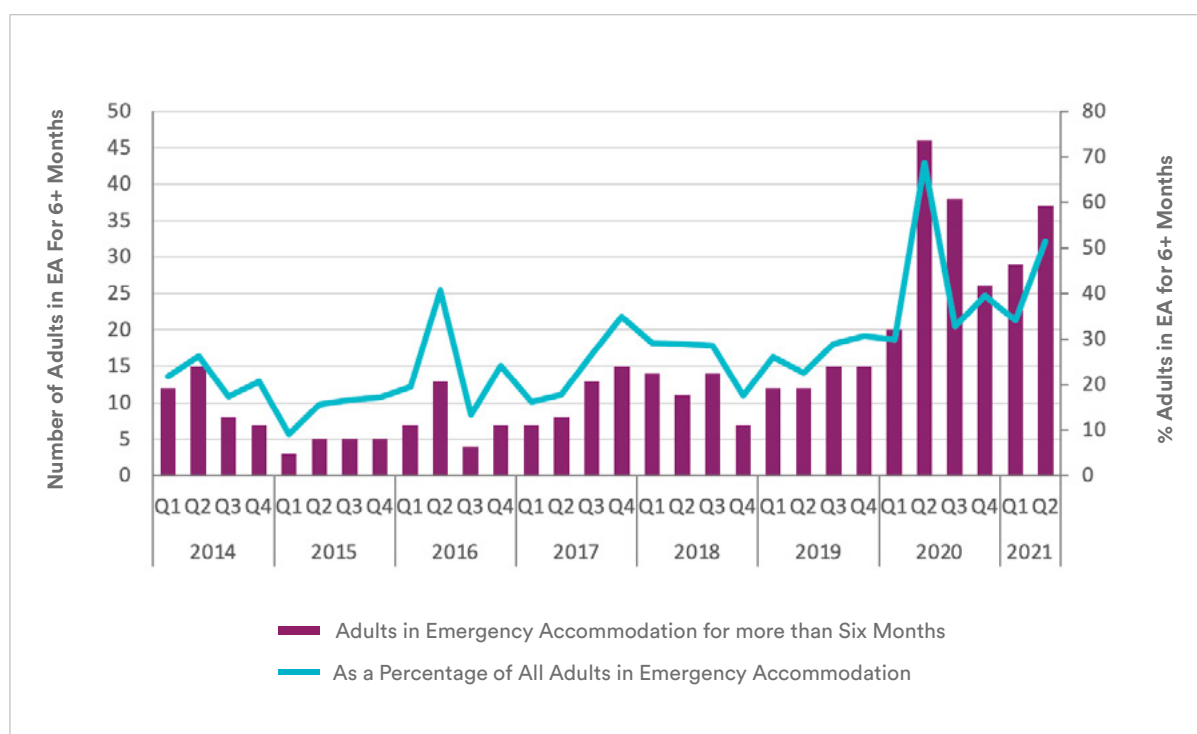
Figure 12: Adult Exits to Housing

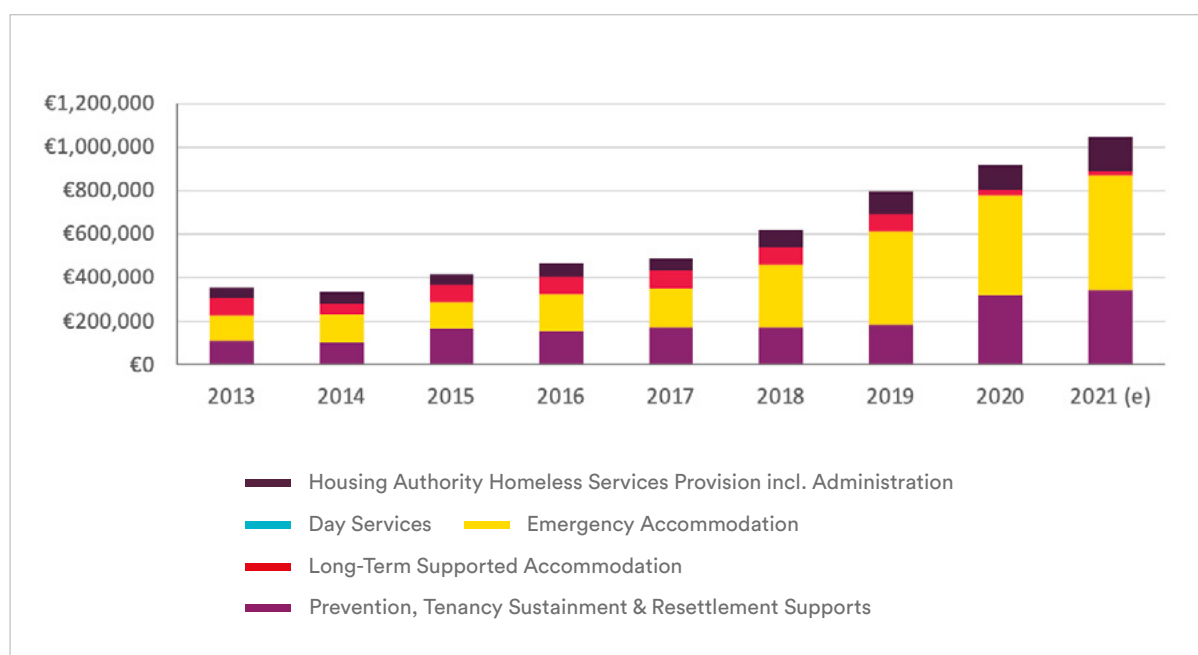
Figure 12 presents the number of adults exiting emergency accommodation in the North-West each quarter and their destination. LA is exits to Local Authority housing, AHB/LTSA is for housing provided by Approved Housing Bodies and PRS is exits to the Private Rented Sector, which are largely supported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

The highest number of exits in one quarter was 44 in Q4 2019, when there was a particularly high number of exits to the Private Rented sector at 38. When compared with the data on presentations in Figure 11, there has not been any quarter since 2014 in which more people exited Emergency Accommodation than presented as homeless.

Overall during the period Q1 2014 – Q2 2021, there were 587 adult exits from emergency accommodation to housing in the North-West: 56% to the PRS, 22% to AHB housing and 22% 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. As of Q2 2021, 51.4% of all homeless adults in the North-West, or 37 individuals, have been in emergency accommodation for over 6 months. This reached its highest point in Q2 2020, at 69% or 46 individuals.

Figure 14: Section 10 Expenditure

Actual expenditure by central (DHLGH) and local government on services for households experiencing homelessness in the North-West increased from €352,854 in 2013 to €916,416 in 2020. In 2021, the North-West estimates it will spend €1.046 million.

In 2020, expenditure on emergency accommodation in the North-West was €457,577, or 50% of total expenditure. Prevention accounted for 35%, Housing Authority services for 12% and LTSA for 3%. There has been no expenditure on Day Services during this period in the North-West.

Between 2013 and 2019, 43% of total expenditure in the North-West was on emergency accommodation.

Eoin O’Sullivan is Professor in Social Policy at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin.

Aisling Reidy is Policy Officer in Focus Ireland.

Mike Allen is Director of Advocacy in Focus Ireland.

FOCUS
Ireland



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

ISBN: 978-1-9996896-4-3

Publication date: August 2021

focusireland.ie

Head Office
9 – 12 High Street,
Christchurch, Dublin 8
D08 E1W0

T 01 881 5900
LoCall 1850 204 205
F 01 881 5950
E info@focusireland.ie

Registered Charity
CHY 7220

FOCUS
Ireland