

Temporary accommodation

A statistical comparison across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

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Front cover photograph: Cast iron houses from Birmingham Road and Ernest Road, Dudley, built in 1925 by Dudley Council, replicated at the Black Country Living Museum. Photograph copyright Neil Morland

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Summary

Temporary accommodation data sets exist for all four UK nations, but inconsistencies in time periods exist, making direct comparisons difficult. Each nation produces its own statistics according to its legislative framework and reporting timeframes.

The number of households in temporary accommodation in England has increased significantly since 1998, more than doubling per million population. The number of households with children in temporary accommodation is at its highest level, the proportion of such households has decreased. The number of single adult households has increased, comprising 29% of households in temporary accommodation in 2025.

The number of households in temporary accommodation in Scotland increased from 4,153 in 2002 to 17,240 in 2025, a rise of over four times. Almost 70% of open cases were single person households, with single parent households making up 17%.

The number of households in temporary accommodation in Wales has tripled since 2016, with a slight decrease in 2025. The number of male applicant single person households increased significantly, now comprising over half of all households in temporary accommodation.

The number of households in temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland has more than doubled since 2019, reaching 5,408 in October 2025. Single male households comprise half of all temporary accommodation placements.

Population trends in the UK show increases across all four nations since 2000, with England experiencing the highest growth. While the number of households in temporary accommodation has risen for all nations since 2019, Scotland and England exhibit distinct long-term trends. Comparisons of household composition in temporary accommodation are limited due to differing data categories and definitions.

All four UK nations experienced increases in households in temporary accommodation from 2019 to 2024, though Wales saw a decrease in 2025. Differences in devolved housing policies, particularly regarding priority need assessments, likely explain the varying trends between the four nations. When measured by per million of population, Scotland has much higher-level levels of temporary accommodation compared to any other UK nation, with the levels for England and Wales being almost identical, reflecting the differences in homelessness law and policy across the nations.

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I. Data Sets

There are temporary accommodation data sets for all four nations. However, there is not consistency in time periods across the four nations, for example Scotland provides annual figures for 31 March, whereas Northern Ireland generally provides two figures per year but which month varies.

The Office of National Statistics report¹ 'Homelessness in the UK: 2004 to 2024' 11 June 2025 identifies that as housing and homelessness are devolved matters, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each produce their own statistics on homelessness, including Temporary Accommodation, according to their own legislative framework, policies and reporting timeframes. It also states that direct comparisons between UK countries in the number of households in temporary accommodation cannot be made although comparisons between overall trends can still be made.

Table 1: temporary accommodation data publication intervals

TA household Data	Earliest date data available	Interval
England	31/03/1998	Quarterly
Scotland	31/03/2002	Annually as at 31 March
Wales	30/06/2015	Quarterly 30/06/2015 -31/12/2019 Annually 31 March 2021 & 2022 Twice a year 31 March & 30 Sept 2023-2025
Northern Ireland	Jan 2019	Minimum twice a year, but timing varies. 2019&20 Jan & July 2021 Jan & Aug 2022 Feb & Jul 2023 Jan & Jul 2024 Jan, Apr & Nov 2025 May & Oct

¹ Homelessness in the UK: 2004 to 2024' 11 June 2025, Office of National Statistics <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/homelessnessintheuk>

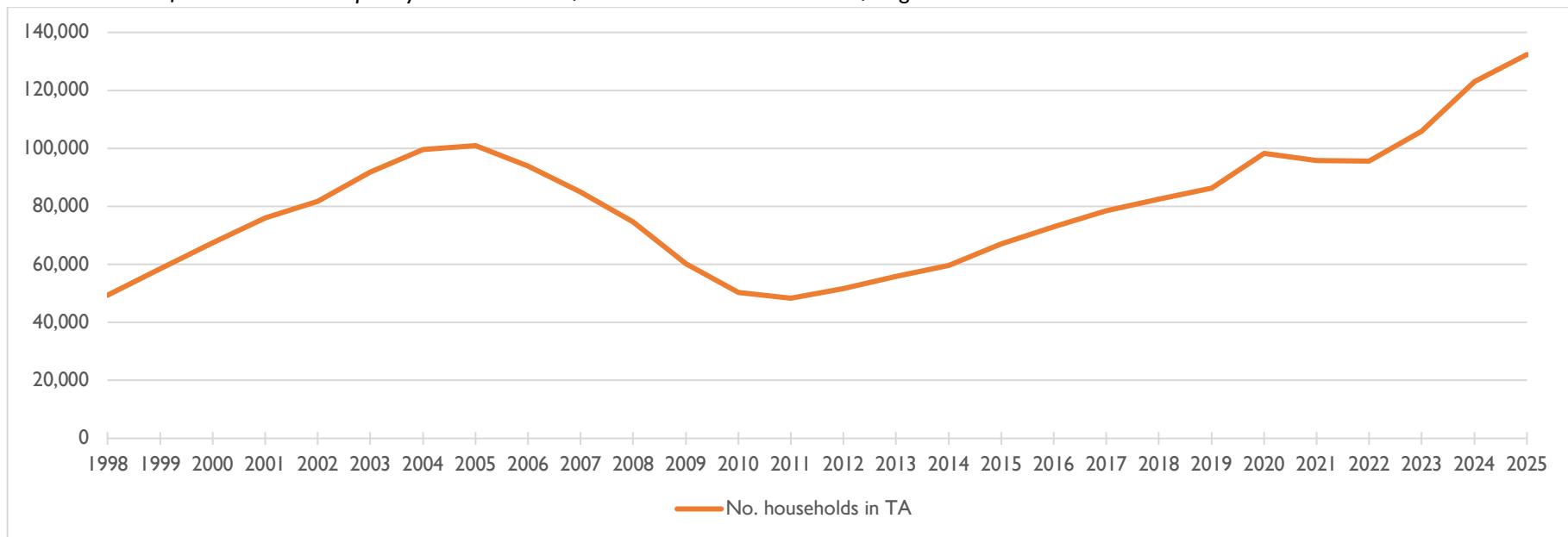
2. England

England Temporary Accommodation Statistics are published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government².

2.1. Temporary accommodation statistics

The number of households in England in temporary accommodation doubled from almost 50,000 (49,390) as at 31 March 1998 to 100,970 seven years later on 31 March 2005. Over a five-year period, by 2010 numbers had reduced by half down to 48,4330 (a record low), before climbing steadily over a decade until almost 100,000 again in 2020. Numbers fell slightly for a couple of years but increased again from 2023 to 135,580 at 31 March 2026.

Chart 1: Number of households in temporary accommodation, 1998 to 2005 at 31st March, England

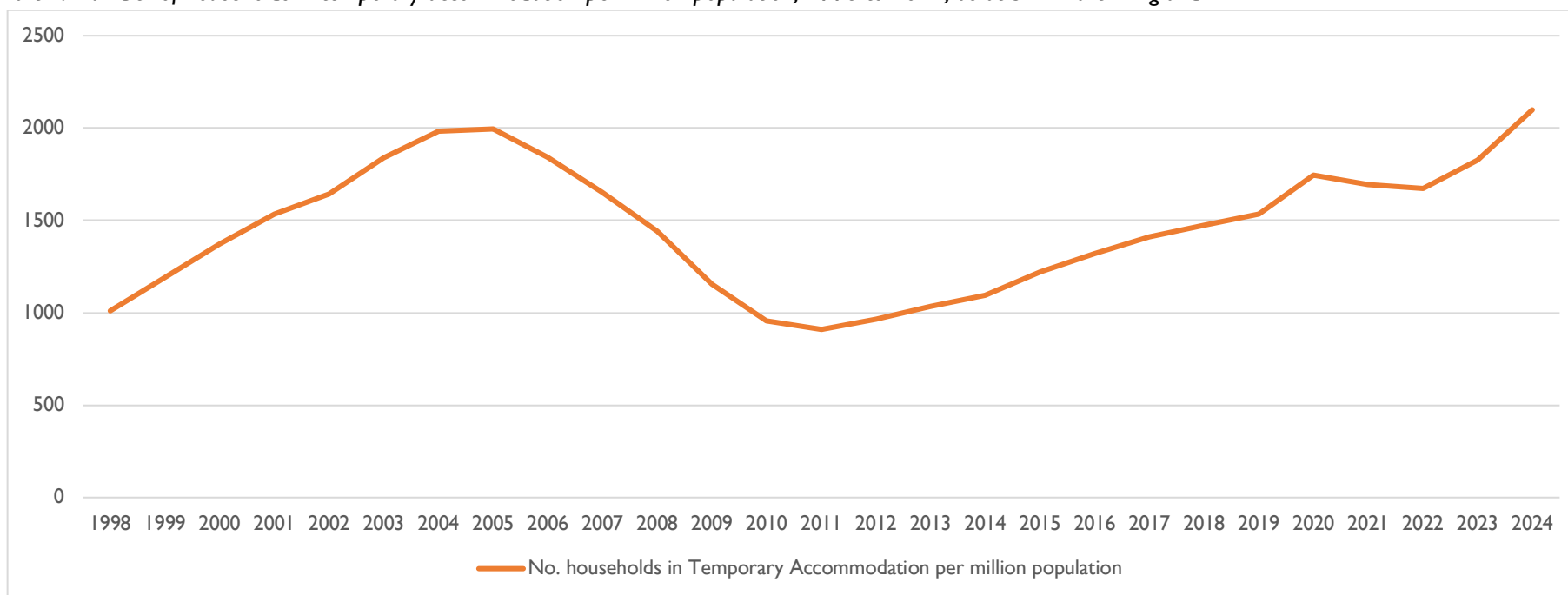


² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

The number of households in temporary accommodation in England has clearly increased significantly since 1998, however the population has also increased. In 2024 the population of England was almost ten million higher than in 1998, an increase of 20% (58,620,101 in 2024 compared to 48,820,583 in 1998).

The number of households in temporary accommodation per one million population more than doubled in the same period, demonstrating that the increases in temporary accommodation in England are not just a function of increased population.

Chart 2: Number of households in temporary accommodation per million population, 1998 to 2024, as at 31st March England



Note: population statistics are ONS mid-year estimates. Most recent year available 2024

Presenting the data in this way helps to demonstrate that while the 2024 temporary accommodation levels are 22% higher than at the previous peak in 2005, the number in temporary accommodation per million population is only 5% higher. Although, as there is an 8% increase in temporary accommodation numbers just from 2024 to 2025, the numbers per million population are also likely to rise further.

2.2. England: composition of households in temporary accommodation

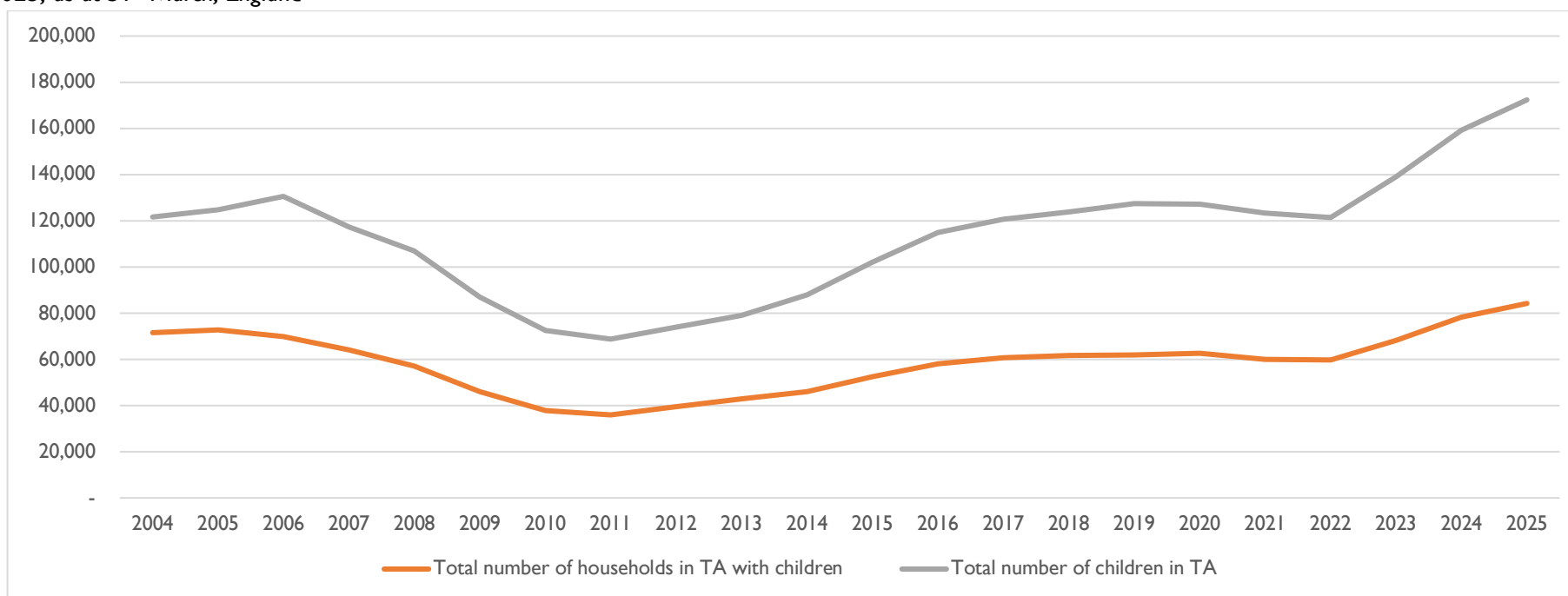
The records of households with children in temporary accommodation in England are available from 2004, and the number is currently at the highest level since these records began, although the proportion of households with children is lower – 64% in 2025 compared to 72% in 2004, and 80% in 2016.

Chart 3: number of households in temporary accommodation with children compared to total number of households in temporary accommodation, 2004 to 2025, as a 31st March, England



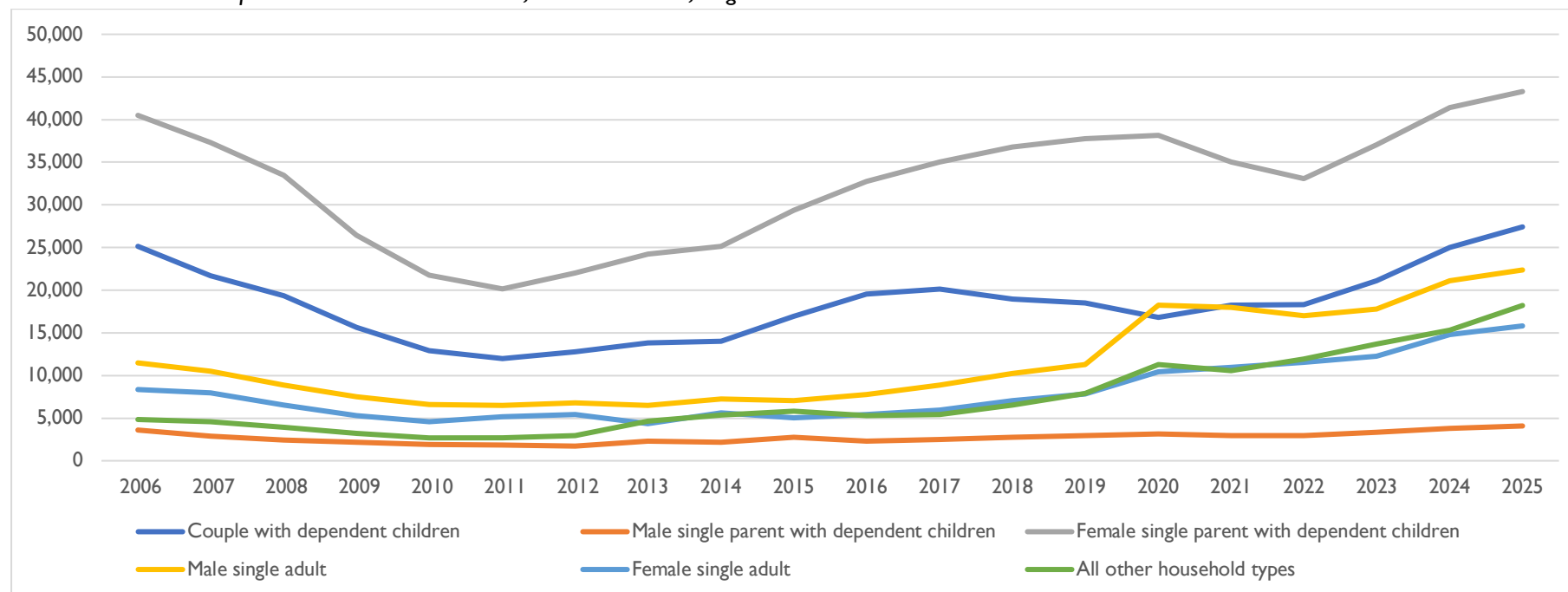
The absolute number of children in temporary accommodation has also increased since 2011 – at a higher rate than the number of households with children in temporary accommodation. The average number of children per household with children in temporary accommodation has increased. This could be due to data anomalies.

Chart 4: comparison of number of households in temporary accommodation with children compared to total number of children in temporary accommodation, 2004 to 2025, as at 31st March, England



Although numbers fell for all categories from 2006 to 2011 & 2012, by 2025 all categories are higher than in 2006. This is particularly so for male single adult and female single adult categories which are both almost double the 2006 level (95% and 90% higher respectively).

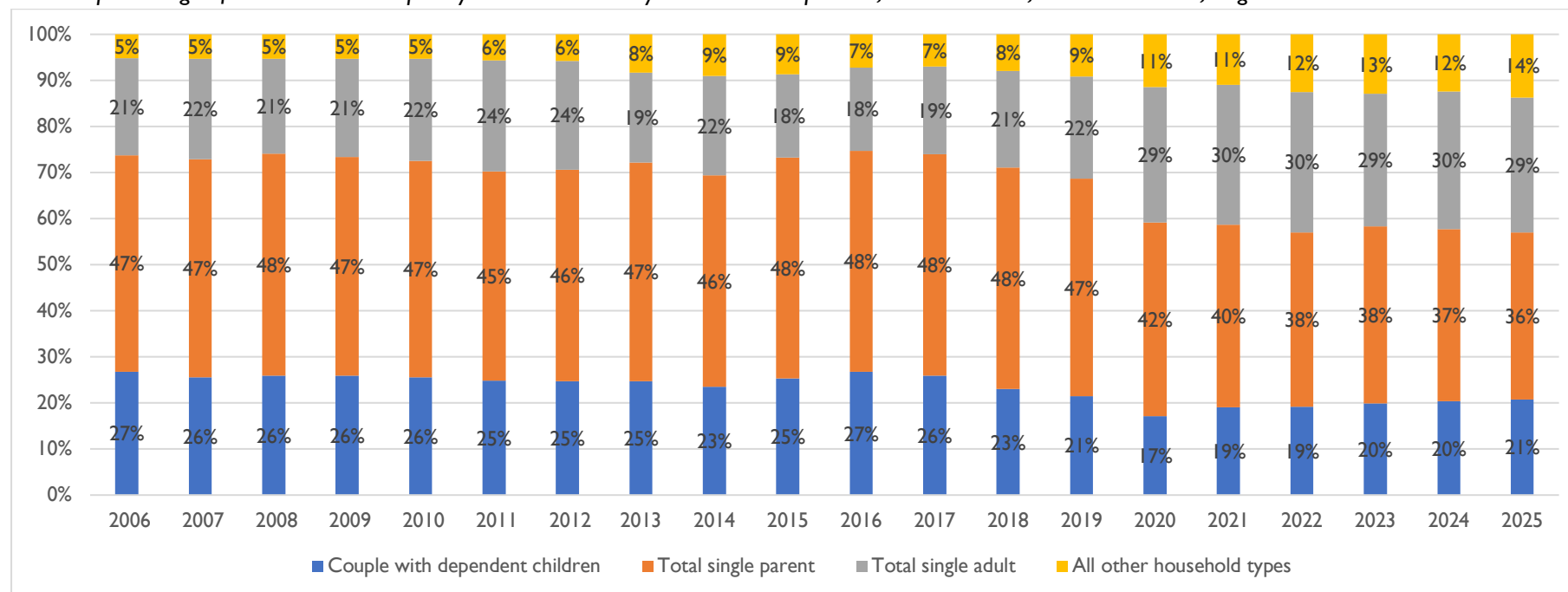
Chart 5: household composition trends 2006 to 2025, as a 31st March, England



Note: The above table excludes 'other single parent' (630 households in 2025) and 'other total single adult' (530 households in 2025) figures as these only started to be collected in 2018.

The chart below shows that the proportion of single adult households has also increased as well as the number – from 21% in 2006 to 29% in 2025. The proportion of households with couples with dependent children and single parents have both reduced, although households with dependent children are still more than half (57%) of households in temporary accommodation in England as at 31/03/2025. Note: there are anomalies between the number of households with children (couple with dependent children and total single parent) and the statistics on number of households in temporary accommodation with children

Chart 6: percentage of households in temporary accommodation by household composition, 2006 to 2025, as at 31st March, England



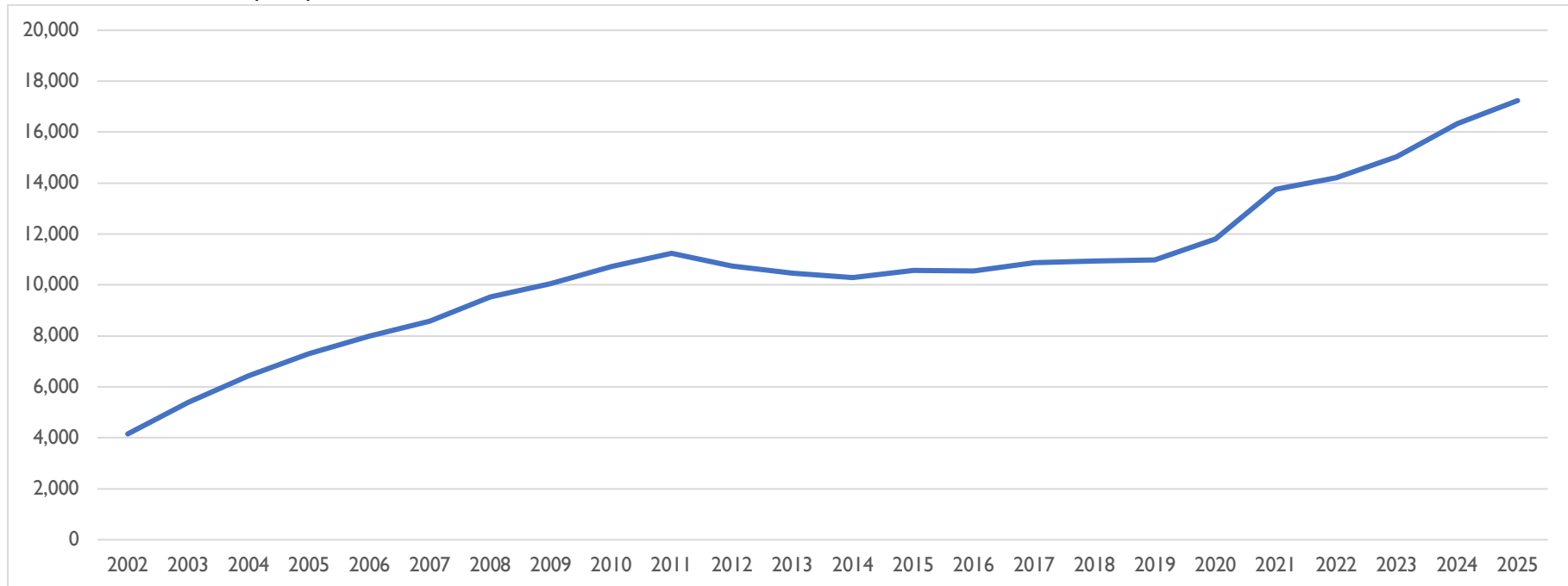
3. Scotland

Temporary accommodation statistics for Scotland are published by the Scottish Government³.

3.1. Temporary Accommodation Statistics

The number of households in temporary Accommodation in Scotland in 2025 was more than four times higher in 2025 than in 2002, rising from 4,153 in 2002 to 17,240 in 2025.

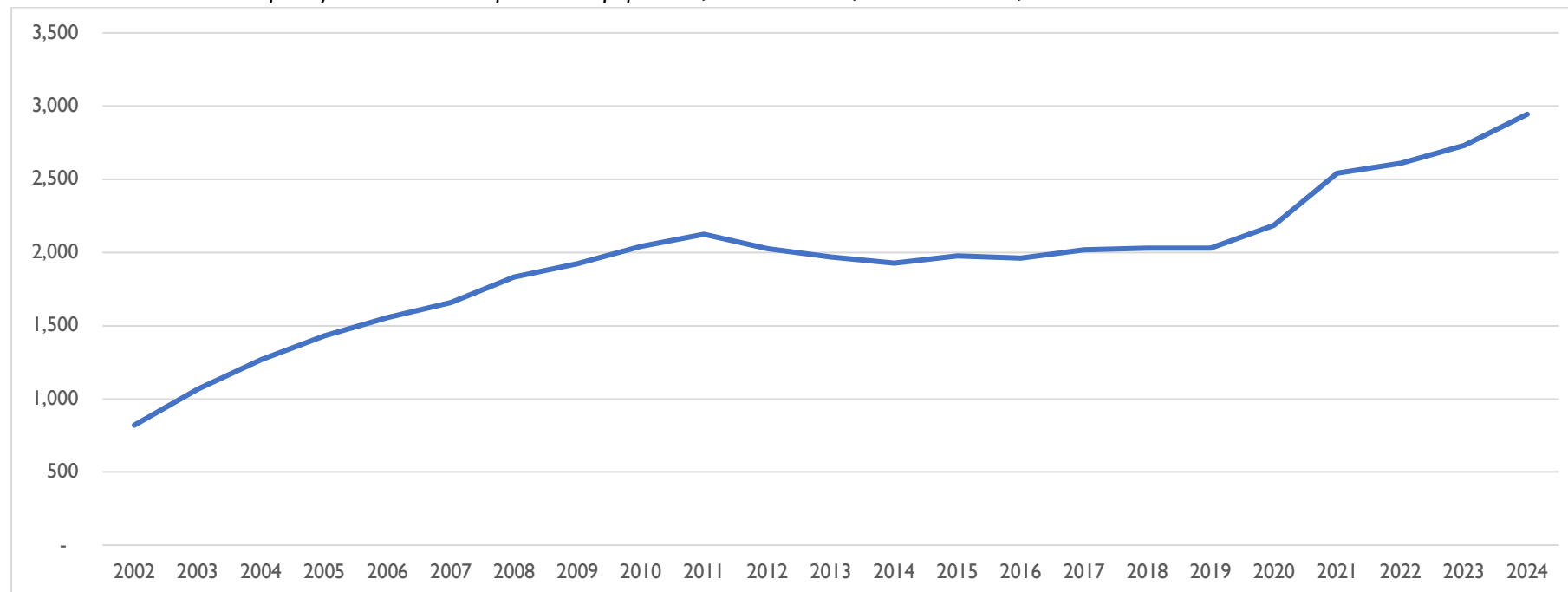
Chart 7: household in temporary accommodation, 2002 to 2025, as at 31st March, Scotland



³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-full-statistical-time-series/> 'Homelessness in Scotland: Main tables - full statistical time series up to 2024-5'

Expressed as a number per one million population, the number of households in temporary accommodation in Scotland increased from 820 households per million in 2002 to 2,944 in 2024. (mid year population estimates for Scotland for 2025 were not released at the time of writing this report). This is an increase of almost four times (x3.9).

Chart 8: households in temporary accommodation per million population, 2002 to 2024, as a 31st March, Scotland

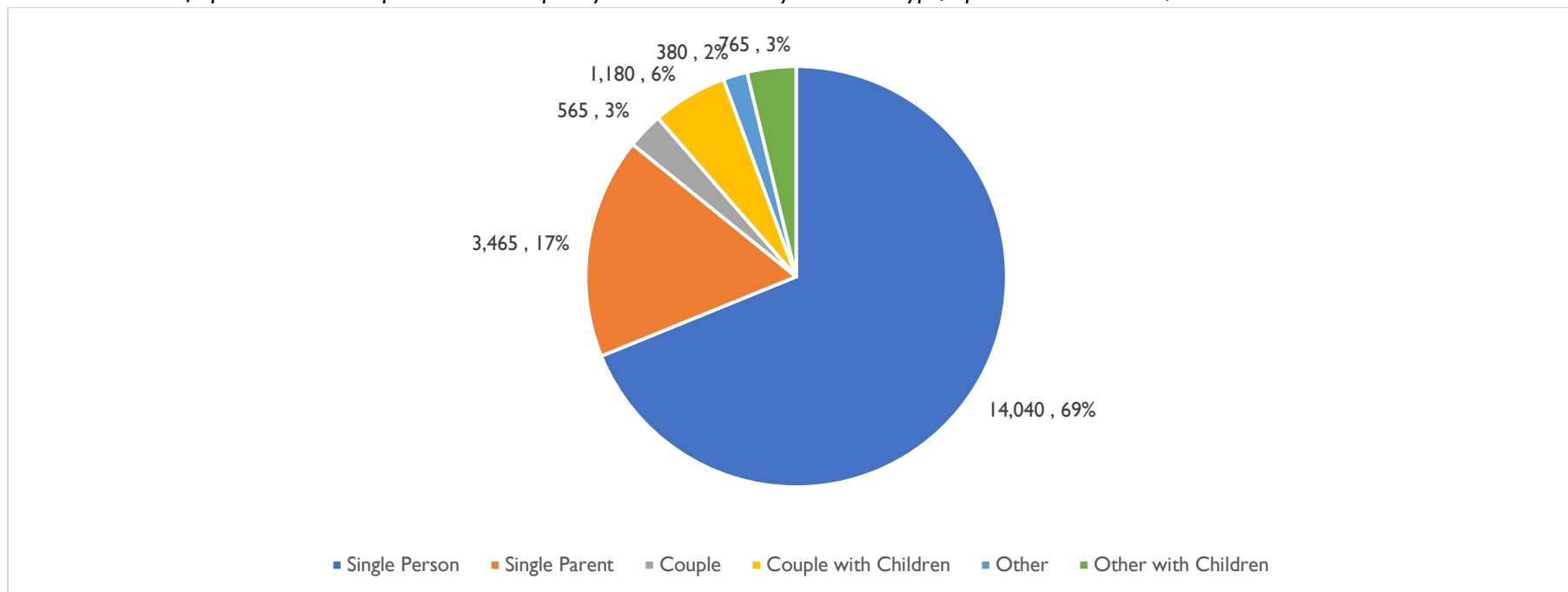


Note: Temporary Accommodation statistics are for 31 March Population statistics are ONS mid-year estimates. Most recent year available 2024

3.2. Composition of households in temporary accommodation

The above chart shows that almost 70% of open cases who had spent time in TA up to 31 March 2025 were single person, the next highest was single parent with 17%. 27% were open cases with children.

Chart 9: number of open cases which spent time in temporary accommodation by household type, up to 31 March 2025, Scotland



Note: Number of open cases is not the same as households, nor is it a snapshot of the number in TA as at 31 March 2025.

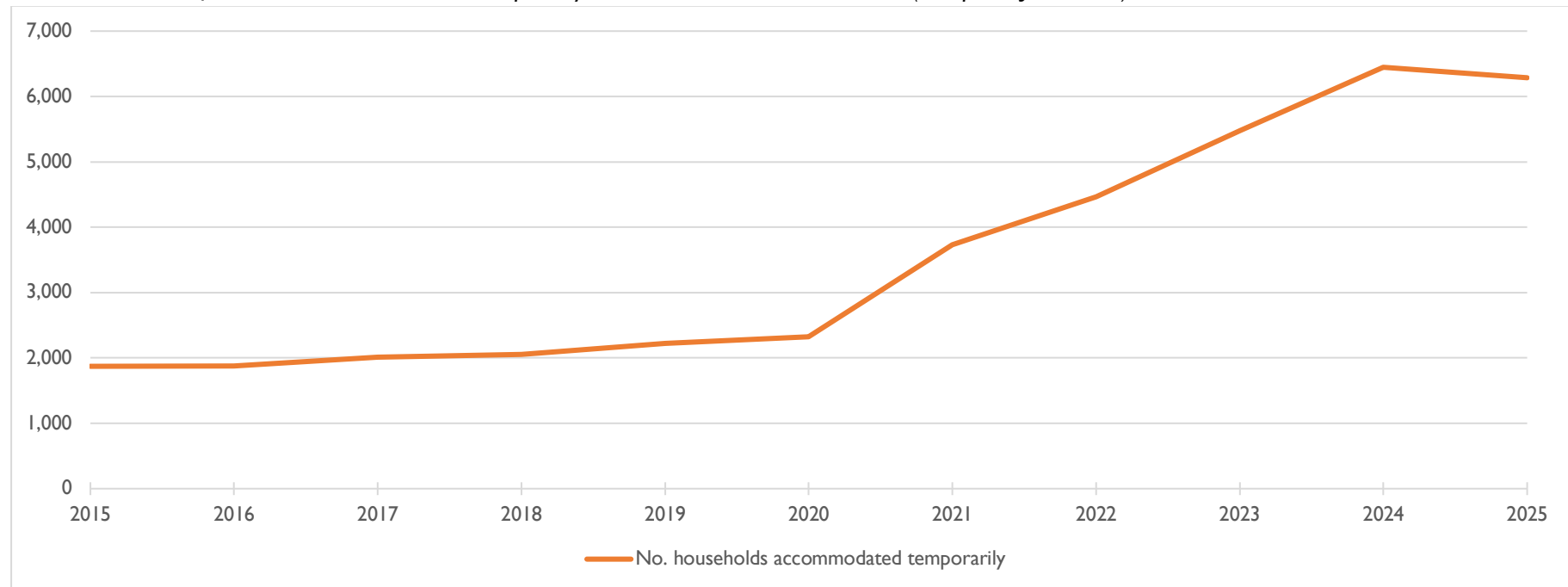
4. Wales

Temporary accommodation statistics for Wales are published by the Welsh Government.⁴

4.1. Temporary Accommodation Statistics

The number of households accommodated temporarily in Wales has more than tripled as at 31/03/2025 (6,285) compared to 2016 (1,875), although there was a decrease of 2.5% in 2025 compared to 2024.

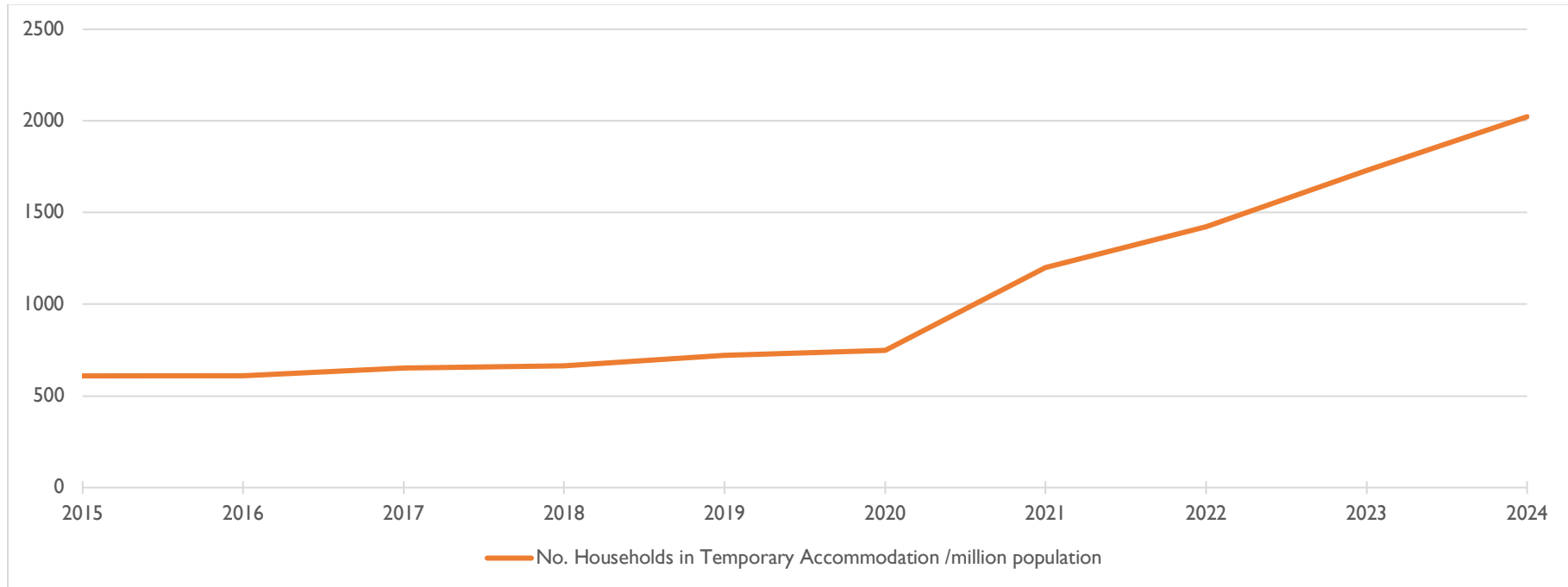
Chart 10: number of households accommodated temporarily, 2015 to 2025, as at 31st March (except 30 June 2015), Wales



⁴ https://stats.gov.wales/en-GB/5c5c13c0-78f9-4232-8afa-5f343ef2b0d5/filtered/6517xkuc68m1?page_size=25&page_number=2#downloads Households accommodated temporarily by accommodation type, house type, and length of stay'

The number of households in temporary accommodation per million population in Wales has more than tripled in 2024 (2023 per million population) compared to 609 per million population in 2016. ONS mid year population estimates for 2025 are not yet available, once available it will be interesting to see if there is also a drop in numbers of households in temporary accommodation per million.

Chart 11: number of households in temporary accommodation per million population, 2015 to 2024, Wales



Note: Temporary Accommodation statistics are for 31 March, except 2015 which are for 30 June. Population statistics are ONS mid-year estimates. Most recent year available 2024

4.2. Composition of households in temporary accommodation

All categories of household have increased significantly in the nine year period. The number of male applicant single person households has increased more than five times. It has also gone from being one third of households in TA in 2016, to over one half in 2025.

Chart 12: snapshot of household type in temporary accommodation at 31 March 2016, Wales

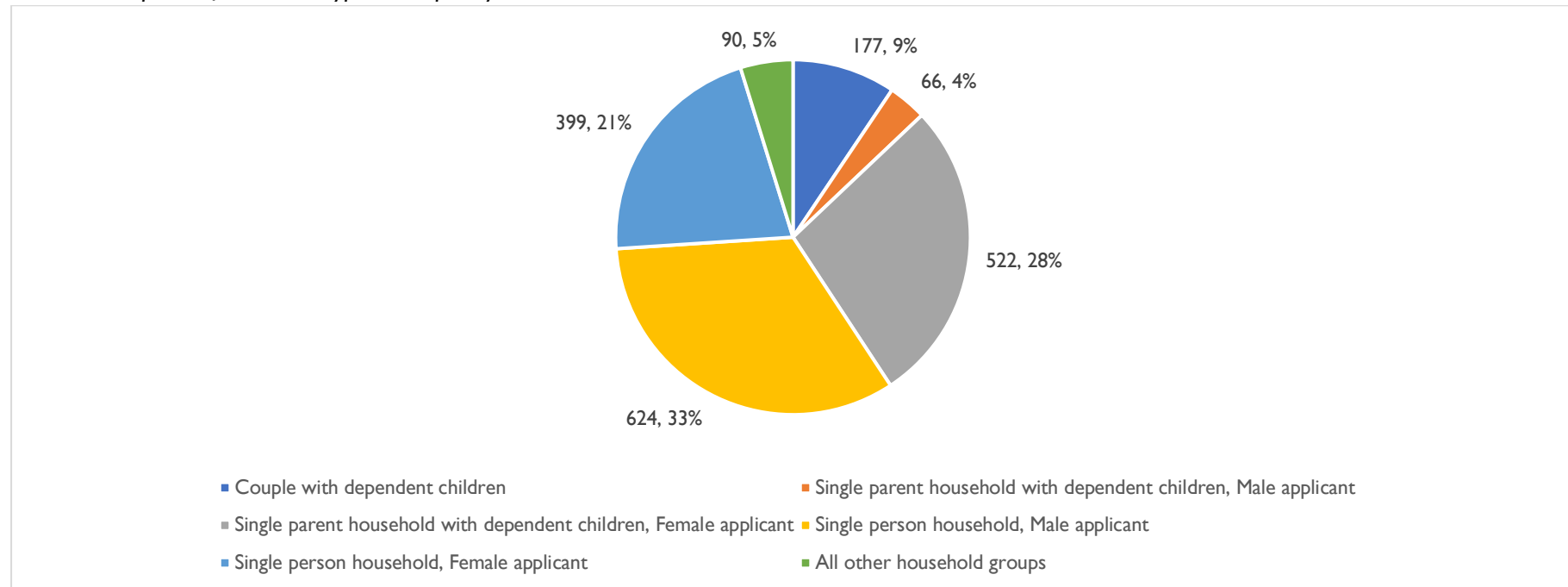
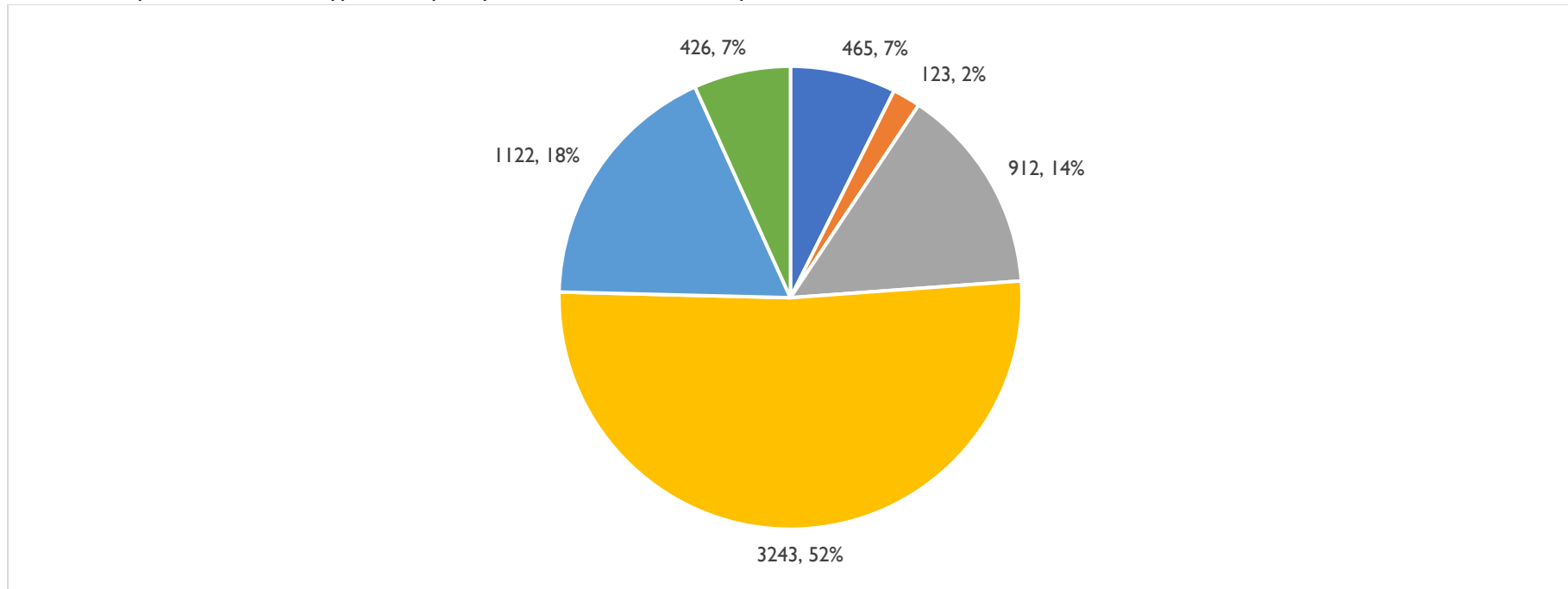


Chart 13: snapshot of household type in temporary accommodation at 30 September 2025, Wales



Note: There are some small anomalies in the data sets so that the 'All households Total' taken from the Welsh Government data set is slightly different from the sum of the household categories.

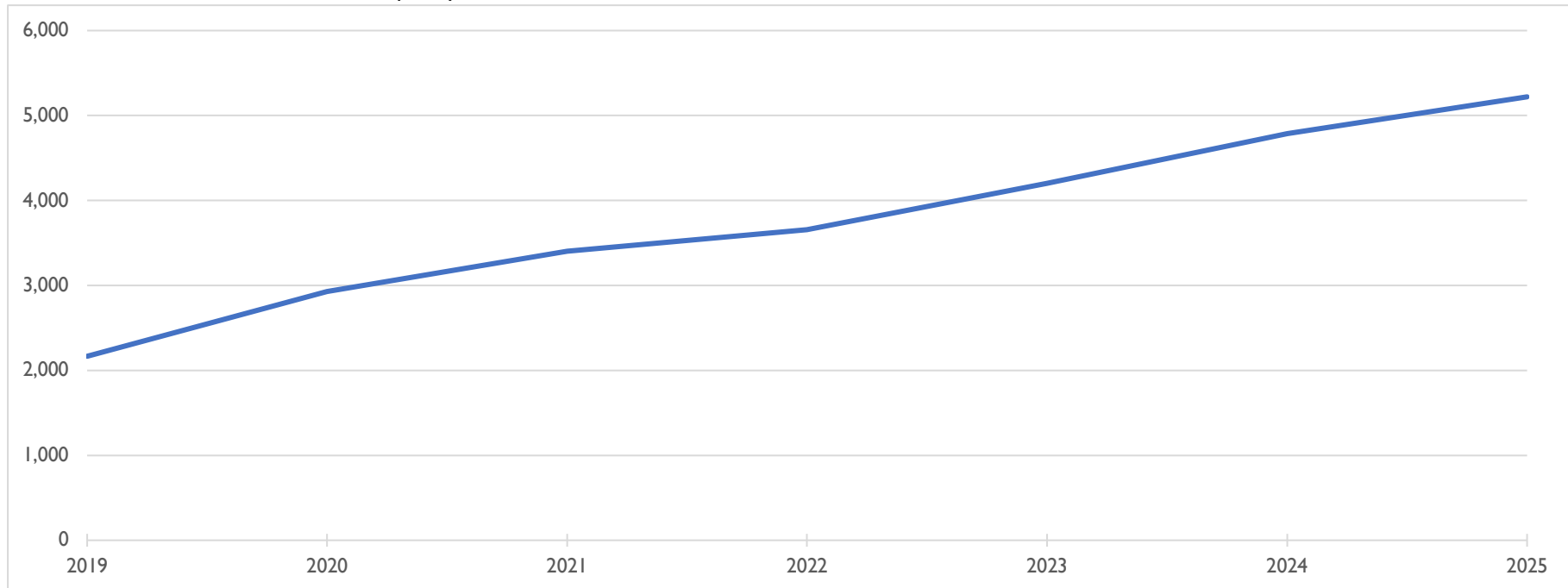
5. Northern Ireland

Temporary Accommodation statistics for Northern Ireland are published by the Northern Irish Government⁵.

5.1 Temporary Accommodation Statistics

The number of households in Northern Ireland in temporary accommodation two and a half times higher in October 2025 (5,408) compared to July 2019 (2,065).

Chart 14: number of households, contemporary accommodation, 2019 to 2025, Northern Ireland

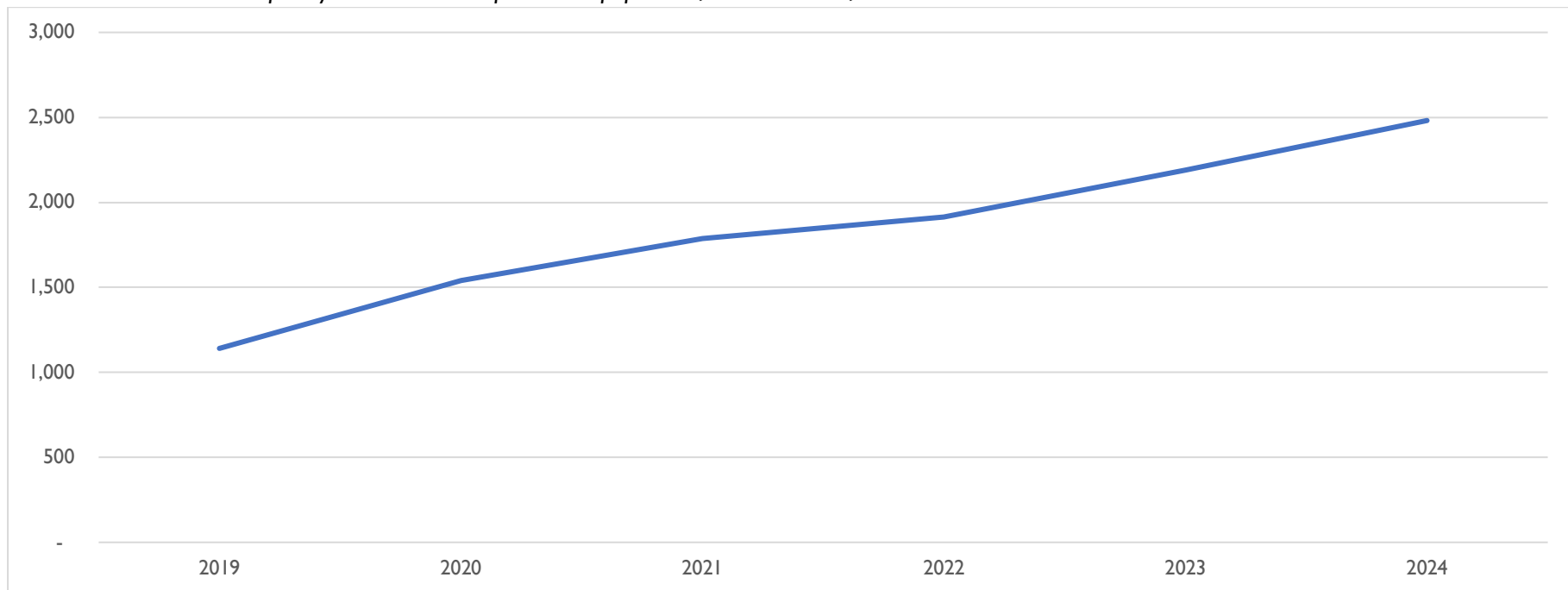


⁵ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-homelessness-bulletin-april-september-2025> 'Northern Ireland Homelessness Bulletin April - September 2025'

The statistics for number of households in temporary accommodation are not available for the same month each year. So comparisons between years may not be comparing like with like – and will not take into account any sessional trends. As there were four years with figures for July, July was chosen, and then for years without a July figure, the figure closest to July was used so there are a range of months from April to August.

When expressed per million population, the number of households in temporary accommodation has more than doubled from 1,141 per million in 2019 to 2,482 per million in 2024. Mid year population estimates are not yet available for 2025, however given the number of households in temporary accommodation increased by 9.1% in May 2025 compared to April 2024, it is likely that this upward trend would continue.

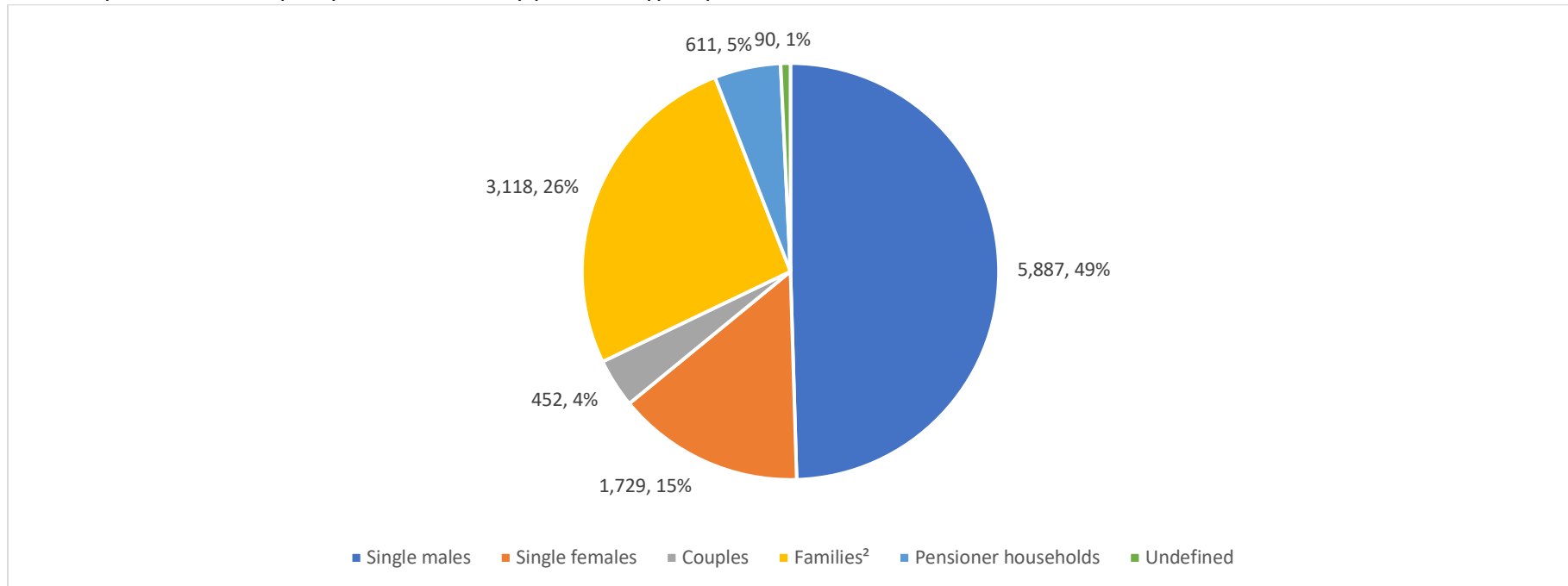
Chart 15: household in temporary accommodation per million population, 2019 to 2024, Northern Ireland



5.2 Composition of households in temporary accommodation

Single male households are half of all temporary accommodation placements in Northern Ireland in 2024/25.

Chart 16: placements in temporary accommodation by placement type, April 2024 to March 2025, Northern Ireland



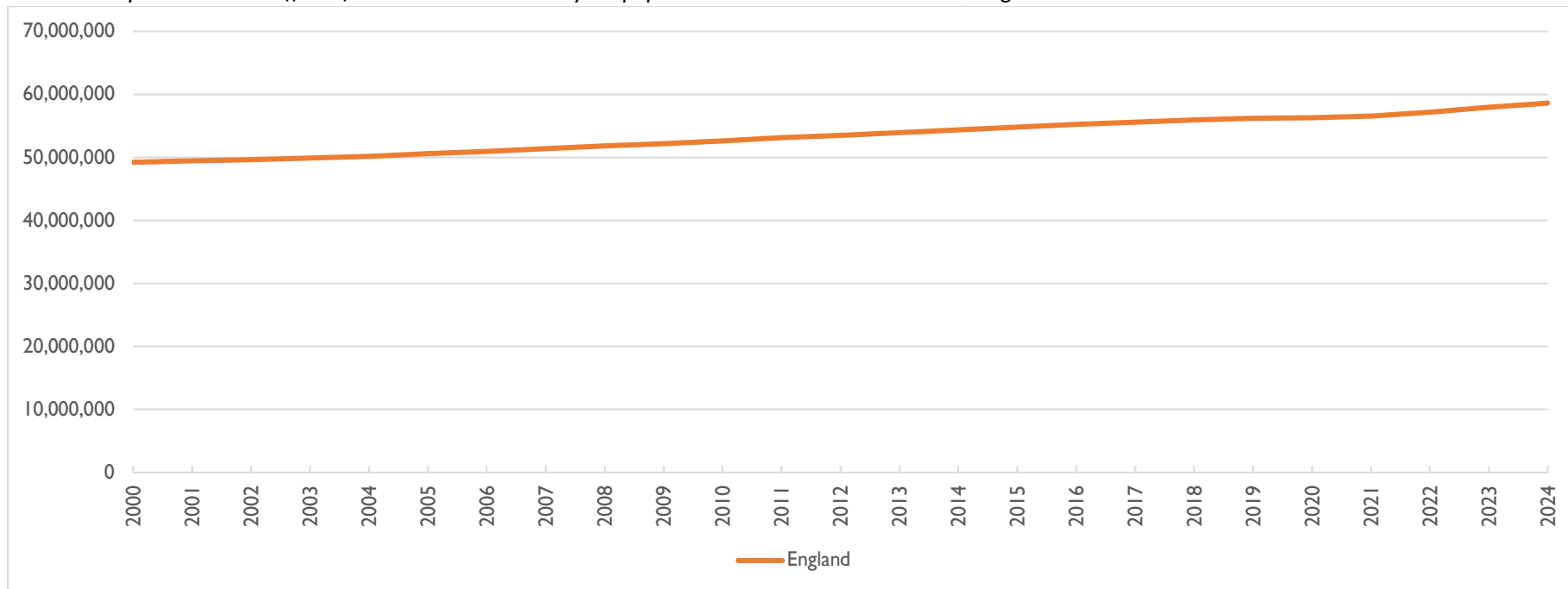
Note: 'Families' does not mean there are children under 18.

6. UK nations

6.1. Comparison of population trends across the four UK nations

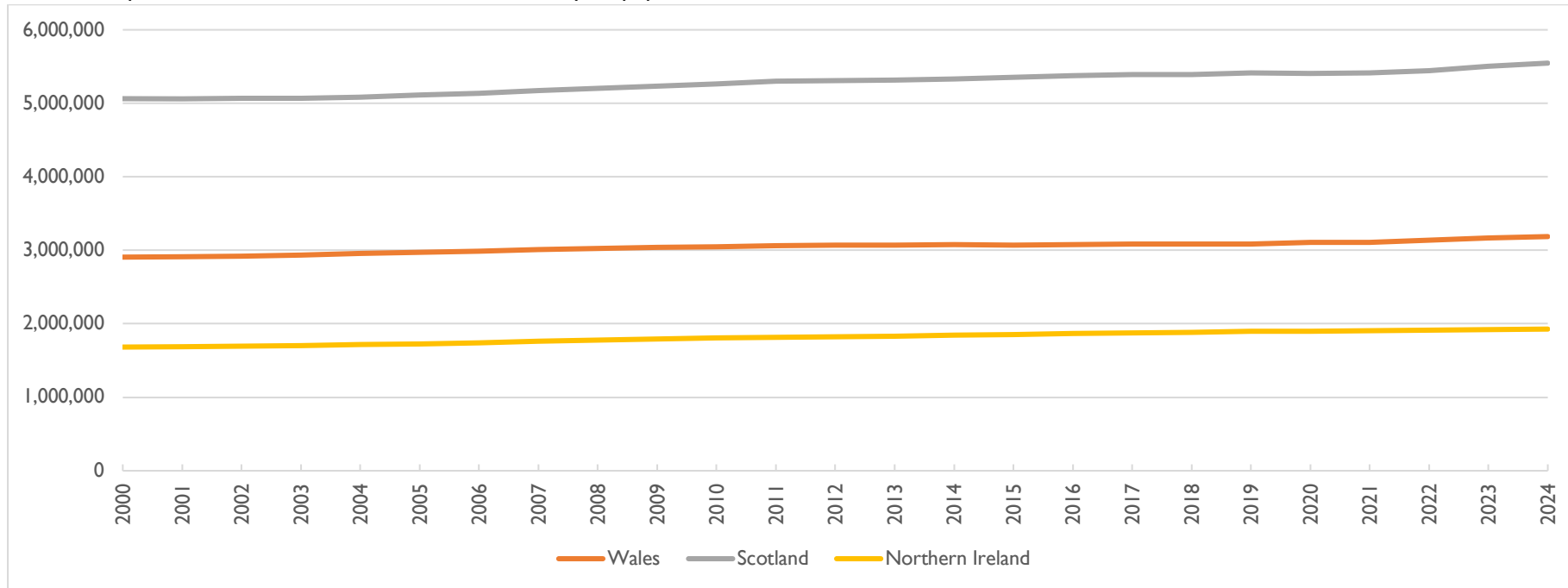
All four nations have experienced population increases since 2000. England's population is so much higher than the other three nations that the population trends need to be shown on a separate chart.

Chart 17: Population trend Office of National Statistics mid-year population estimates 2000 to 2024, England



All four nations have experienced population increases since 2000, albeit at different rates. England's population has increased by almost one fifth (19.07%) in that time, northern Ireland 15% (14.55%) and Wales and Scotland both 10% (9.62% and 9.56% respectively).

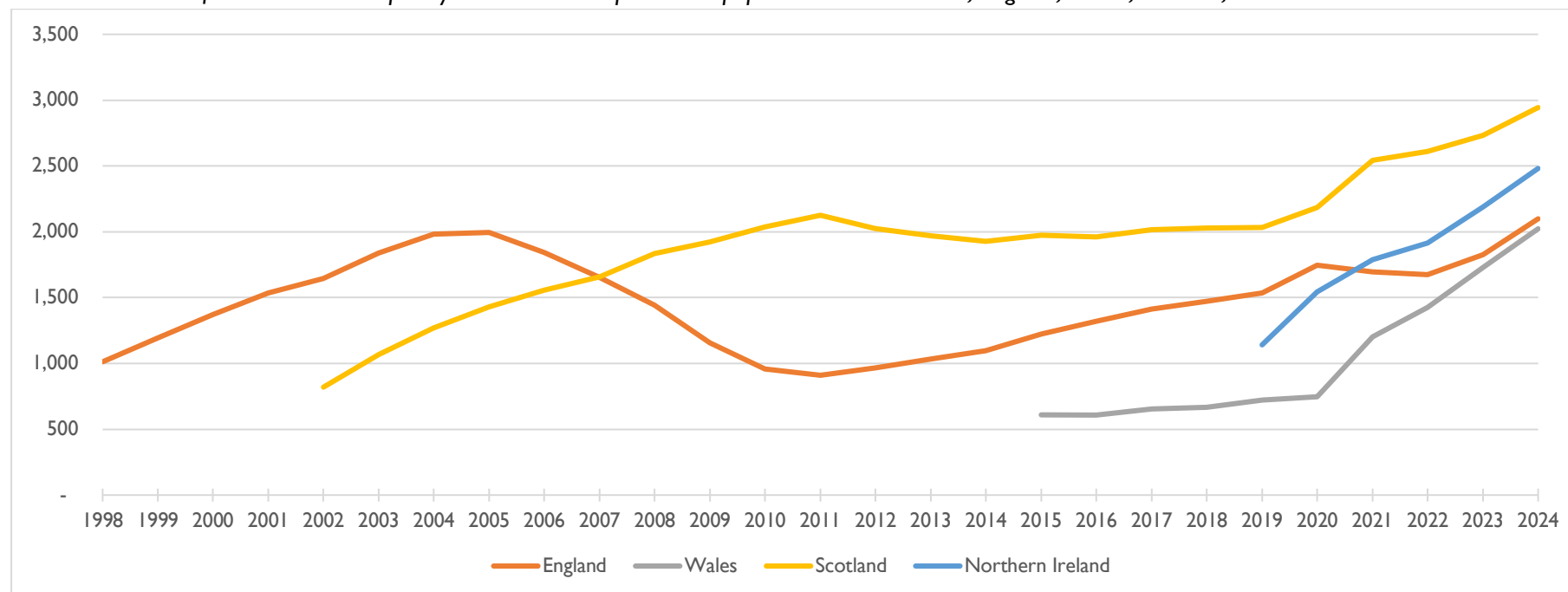
Chart 18: Population trend Office of National Statistics mid-year population estimates 2000 to 2024, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland



Comparing the levels of households in temporary accommodation per million population allows a comparison both between the four nations and over time.

Scotland and England have the longest data sets, but they follow very different paths.

Chart 19: number of households in temporary accommodation per million population 1998 to 2024, England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland

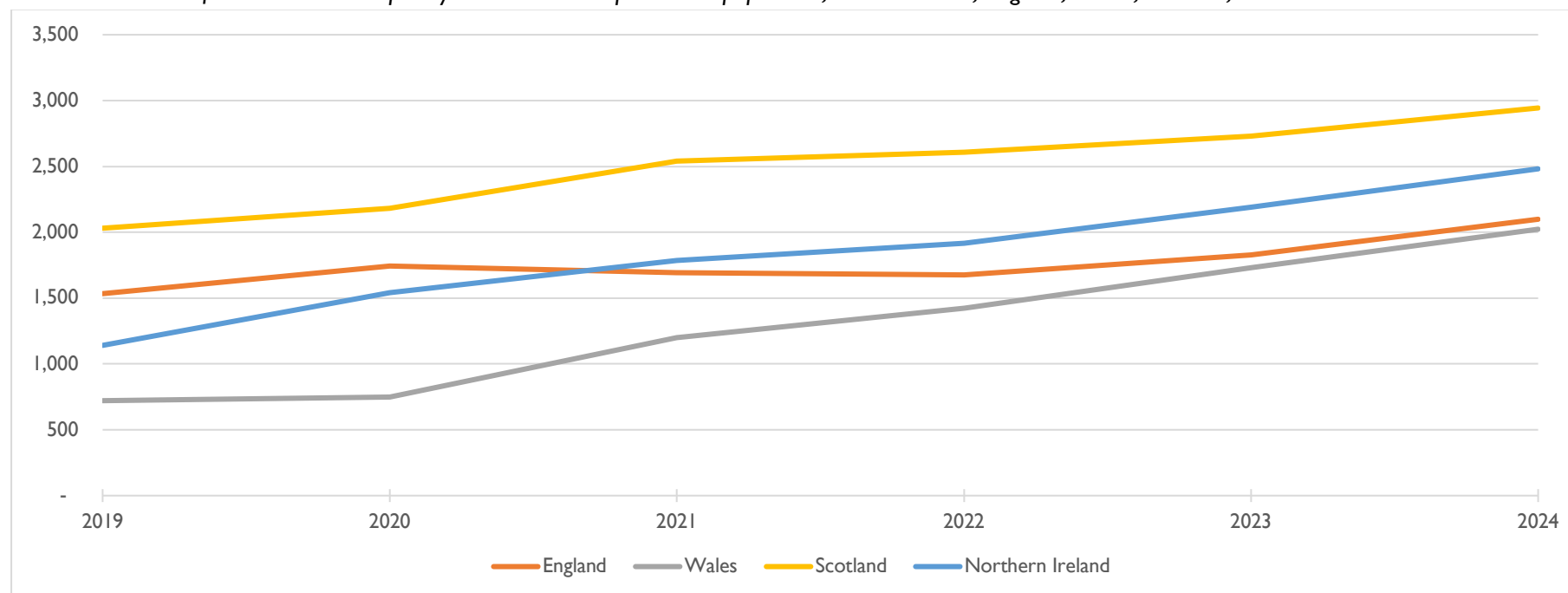


The number of households in temporary accommodation has increased at a higher rate than population growth for all four UK nations since 2019 which is the first year there is a complete temporary accommodation set for all four UK nations.

Looking back at the longer-term trends there have been big variations between Scotland and England's rates of households in temporary accommodation per million population. For the first year where figures are available for Scotland in 2002, the number of households in temporary accommodation in England was double that of Scotland. This difference shrank as England's rates fell and Scotland's rates grew until 2007 when they were roughly equal. Since 2008, Scotland's rates of households in temporary accommodation per million population have been markedly higher than England's lowest – the graph shows almost a mirror image.

There is a convergence in numbers of households in temporary accommodation between the four UK nations in recent years, especially for England and Wales. In 2019 the difference per million population between the lowest rate (Wales – 721) and Scotland (2,031) was 1310. And England has more than double the number than Wales – with 1,534. The most recent figures the gap has reduced to 921 between the lowest (Wales - 2033) and the highest (Scotland 2944). England and Wales have almost the same levels with 2,099 and 2,033 respectively.

Chart 20: number of households in temporary accommodation per million population, 2019 to 2024, England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland



6.2. Comparison of composition of households in temporary accommodation across the four UK nations

It is not possible to properly compare the household compositions of households in temporary accommodation across all four nations. Wales and England have comparable figures for composition of 'snapshot' data of numbers in temporary accommodation. Scotland has statistics for

the number of open cases who have been in temporary accommodation during the financial year. For Northern Ireland the statistics are for 'placements in temporary accommodation in a given period, but does not represent distinct households – one household may have more than one placement in a short time frame. The only comparable category is single households - 64% of placements in temporary accommodation in Northern Ireland during 2024/25 were single households. The other categories are not comparable, particularly 'families' which does NOT mean there are children under 18. Families may, for example, include parents and children who are over the age of 18 or adult siblings/other relatives living together.

Chart 21: numbers in temporary accommodation by household type as at 31st of March 2025, England

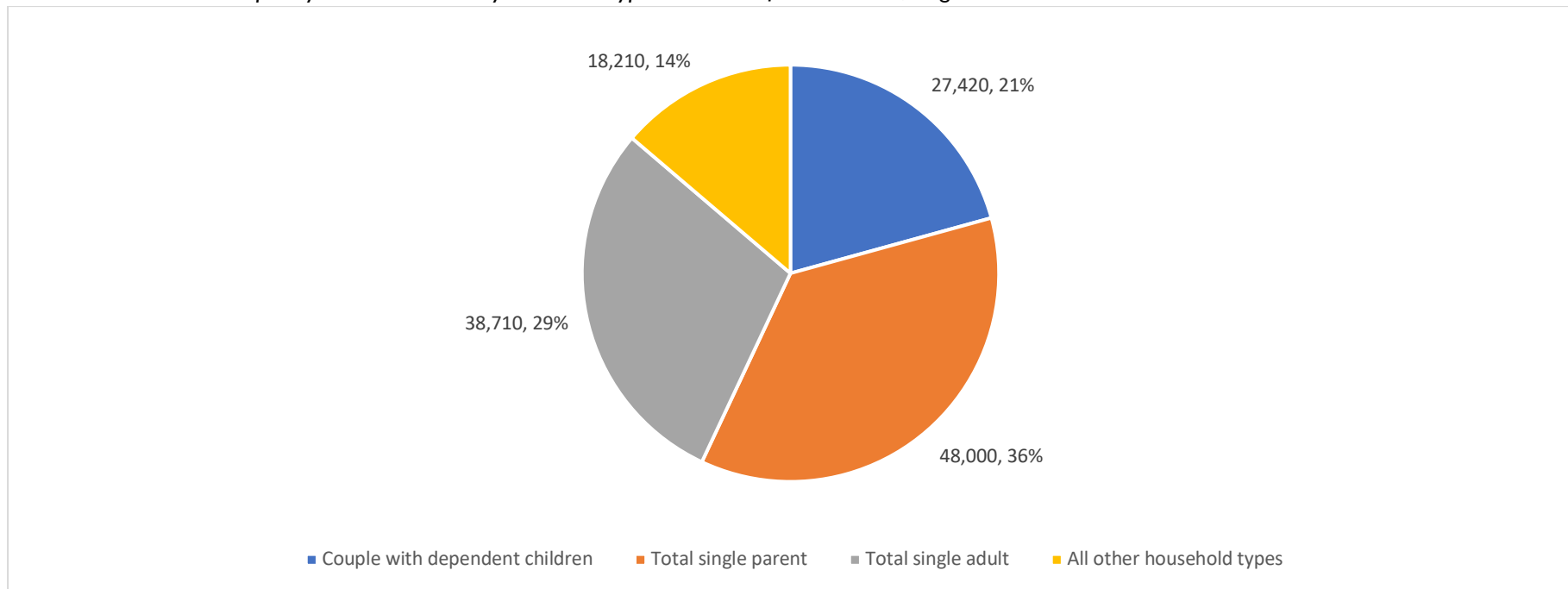


Chart 22: number of cases which spent time in temporary accommodation, up to 31 March 2025, Scotland

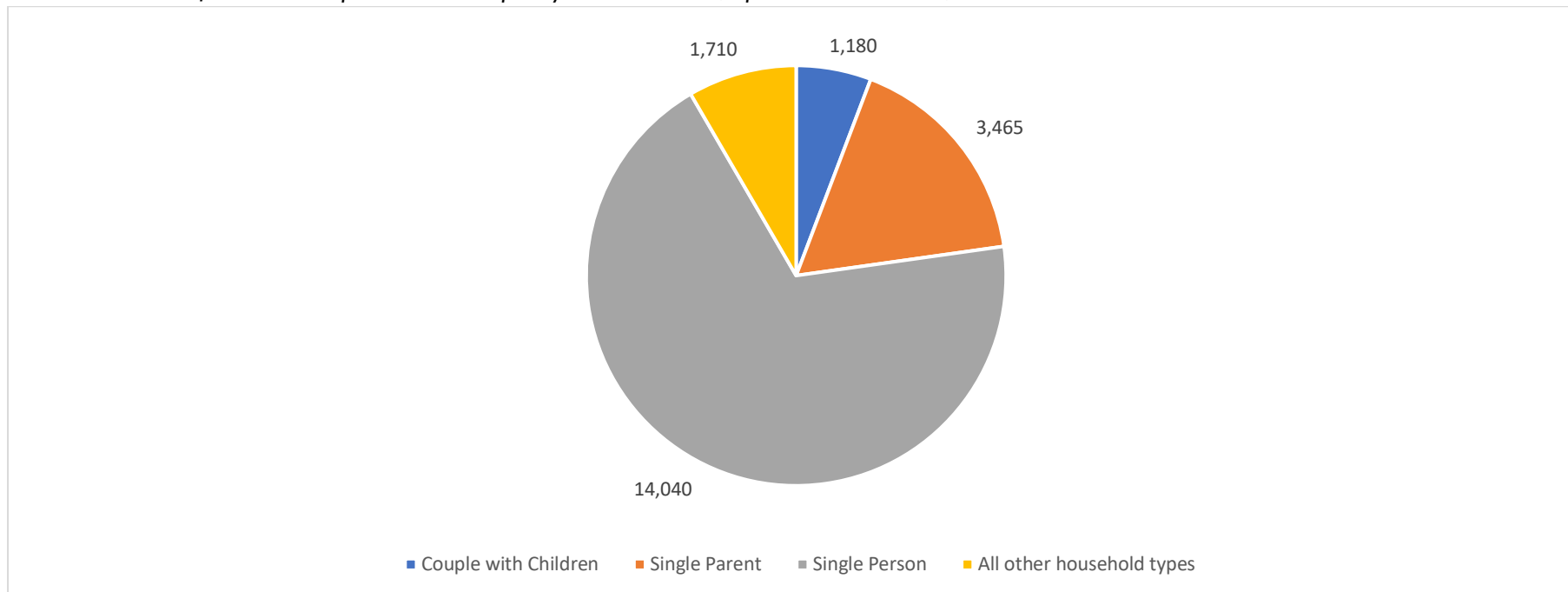


Chart 23: composition of households in temporary accommodation as at 30th September 2025, Wales

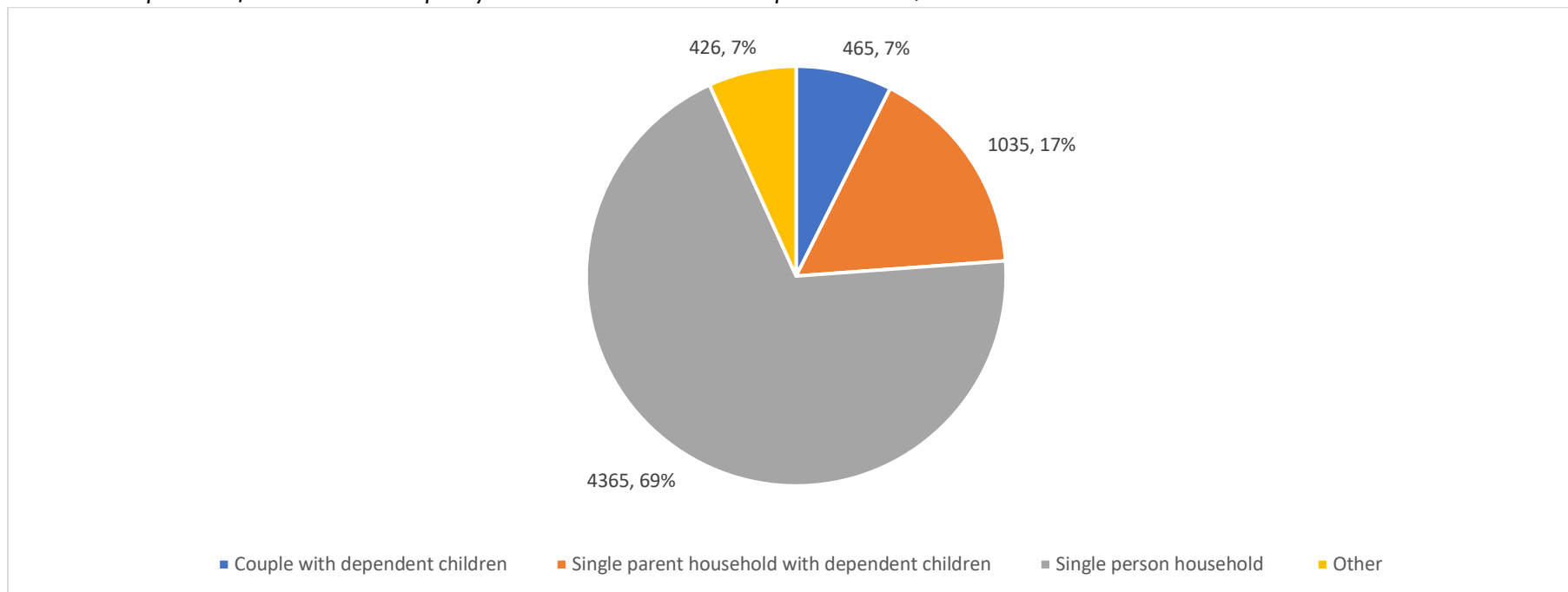
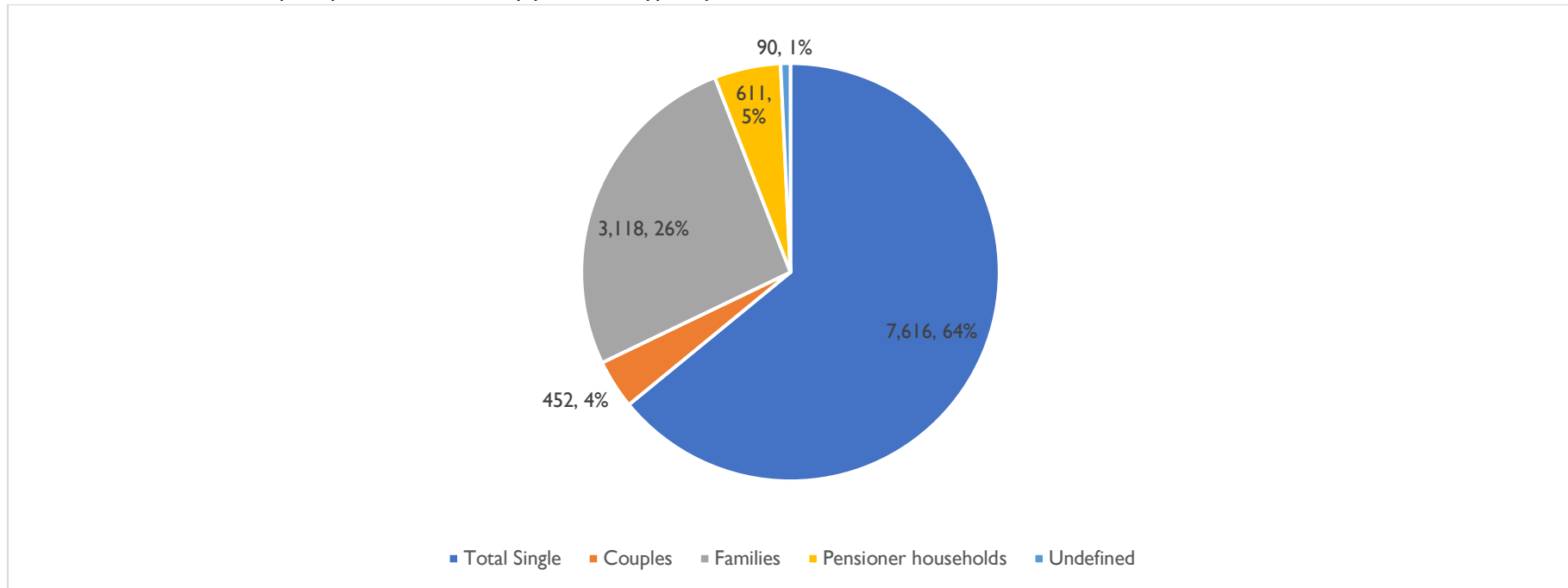


Chart 24: Placements in temporary accommodation by placement type, April 2024 to March 2025, Northern Ireland



7. Conclusions

All four UK nations have experienced increases in levels of households in temporary accommodation per million population in 2024 compared to 2019, although as the absolute number of households in temporary accommodation in Wales fell in 2025 compared to the previous year, this trend may not continue. Before that, there is really only data to compare England and Scotland's longer-term trends – which show very different patterns since 2002 when there was first data available for both countries.

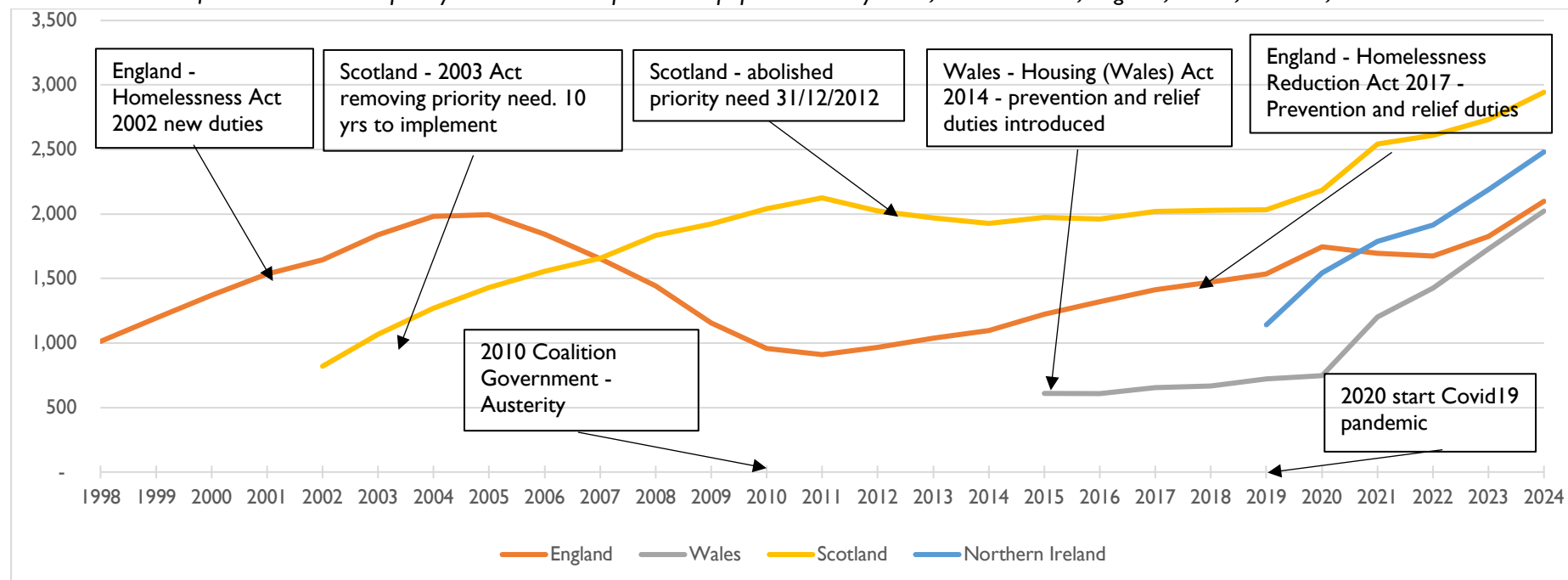
Data for England is much richer than that compared to any of the other UK nations, allowing for a much more comprehensive analysis of temporary accommodation trends.

The four UK nations do have variations in their economies and social need but they have all experienced the same world global events and world economic drivers and the differences between Scotland and England's levels of use of temporary accommodation must be explained by the different nations' devolved housing policies.

Looking again at the long-term trends, the downward trend in England from 2004 was likely to be in response to provisions in the 2002 Homelessness Act (which required local authorities to take a strategic approach to tackling homelessness). This reduction was reversed following the coalition government's austerity framework starting in 2010 including measures such as the 'bedroom tax' and benefit cap which increased the recourse to temporary accommodation. Conversely in Scotland, a 2003 Act removed the requirement for applicants to demonstrate 'priority need'. This came into force on 31 December 2012 and meant that more applicants were entitled to temporary accommodation. The numbers in Scotland fell slightly in but have been climbing since 2014.

During Covid England & Wales introduced emergency provisions to ensure all rough sleepers were accommodated. This was not required in Scotland as all rough sleepers were already entitled to temporary accommodation.

Chart 25: number of household and temporary accommodation per million population – key dates, 1998 to 2024, England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland



It is difficult to compare household composition as different UK nations categorise them differently, but crude analysis appears to suggest that England has higher levels of households with children in temporary accommodation than other nations. Priority need assessment in England means that the proportion of household in temporary accommodation that include children may be higher than in Scotland where no priority need assessment takes place.

Of course, households in temporary accommodation statistics form only one part of many influences, but the analysis across the four nations shows that devolved housing policy does create differences.

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