

Strategising against hidden homelessness

Basis Sex Work and Leeds City Council

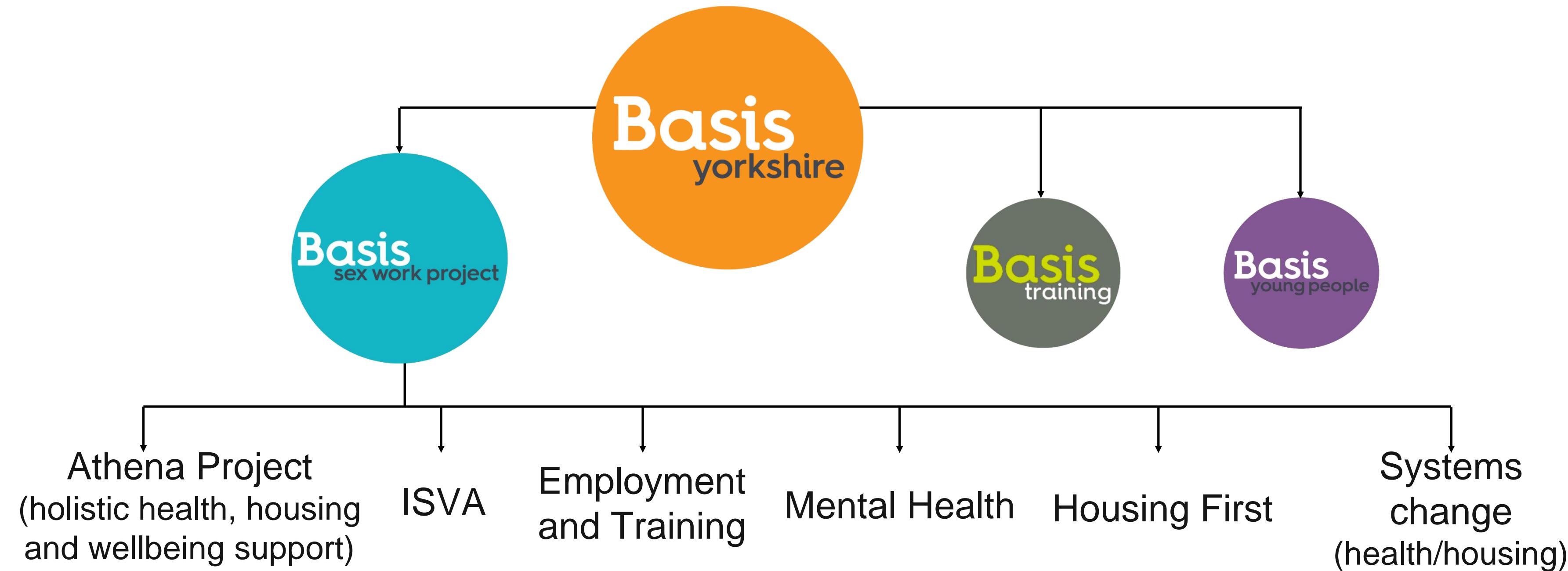


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Who Basis are (and why we care!)



- Regardless of focus, **much of our frontline work** is taken up responding to problems with housing.
- We became aware of many women experiencing homelessness who were **not otherwise engaged with homelessness services**.
- Funding secured via Homeless Link's Ending Women's Homelessness scheme to begin a programme of systems change work.

What we found



- Sex workers are disproportionately impacted by homelessness – but their experiences of homelessness impact women more broadly.
- Women are much less likely to engage with traditional homelessness services - less likely to be seen on street counts, will stay with clients, dealers etc. rather than sleep rough.
- Current statutory homelessness interventions are not designed to respond to hidden homelessness, meaning women are often locked out of support.
- Women's homelessness and trauma often go hand in hand – meaning that services can be inaccessible if they are not trauma informed.

Creating change

- Leeds had a proven track record of **positive risk** for women, and an appetite to create change across the city.
- Identified women's homelessness **as a whole system problem** to be solved, rather than point fingers at individual practice.
- Dedicated time to engaging with a broad range of stakeholders **at all levels of the system** – strategic, operational, and front line.
- Utilised our existing ethos of participation to **engage women in research and problem-solving**.
- Engaged with the local authority to act as chair of the **strategic approach to hidden and repeat homelessness**.
- Facilitating a women's homelessness frontline network to monitor the impact of strategic changes thanks to St-Martin-In-The-Fields Frontline Network.



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Gender-informed services in Leeds



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Pre-pandemic

Gender-specific provision available

Listening to our providers and the people we support

Identifying the challenges that women faced

Lack of statistical data

Identifying the gaps

Setting out our ambitions

The beginning of the journey

- Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding to pilot a female only 'Somewhere Safe to Stay' emergency accommodation provision
- 5 overnight beds, direct access, shared provision, 72 hour stay
- Used an existing building and service at St Anne's Resource Centre
- Referrals made by Leeds Housing Options and Leeds City Council Out Of Hours Services
- Immediate assessment and move on plan into longer term, sustainable and supported accommodation



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Learning as we went

- Women struggled to leave the HUB at 7am
- Lack of day time and weekend provision which required additional funding
- 72 hours was limited and move on options took longer
- Lack of opportunity to provide intensive support
- Shared accommodation
- Full capacity

Learning as we went – the pandemic

- Shared provision closed under PHE guidelines
- Secured self-contained hotel accommodation in City Centre location
- 5 beds increased to 22
- A partnership was created
- Food was provided
- 24 hour support delivered from a MDT
- Move on accommodation still found to be slow and unfavourable with the women
- Series of consultation events took place



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Next steps

- Next Steps Accommodation Programme funding
- Renovating a purpose built building
- Providing a mixture of emergency, shared and self-contained bedrooms with fully equipped facilities including Wi-Fi
- Disabled and Arson Safe room
- 247 on site support, 247 direct access, with immediate assessment, support plan, accommodation pathway and support available from a multi-disciplinary team that transfers with the client through effective handover
- Aim to leave after 3 months



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The future

- Continue to learn: analyse, review, plan and do
- Seek support from the partnership #TeamLeeds
- Expand on move on accommodation
- Supported accommodation dispersed in the community with visiting support
 - Beacon
- Two small shared houses in the community with 30 hours visiting support – St Anne's Community Services
- Awaiting news on a bid to fund 15 one bed houses in the community with intensive visiting support with 3 year lease – Together Women Project

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

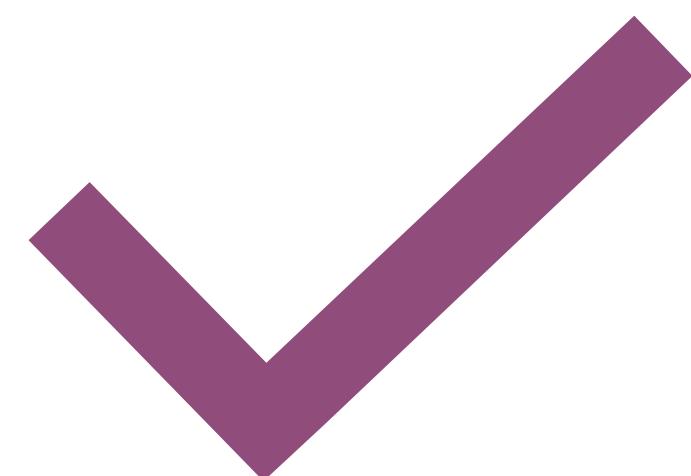


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The strategy

- We are legally required to have one
- The current strategy ends at the end of 2021
- It sets the strategic direction for the service and wider engagement and partnerships



Current themes

Minimise rough sleeping

Maximise homelessness prevention

Housing related support

Youth homelessness

Priority groups



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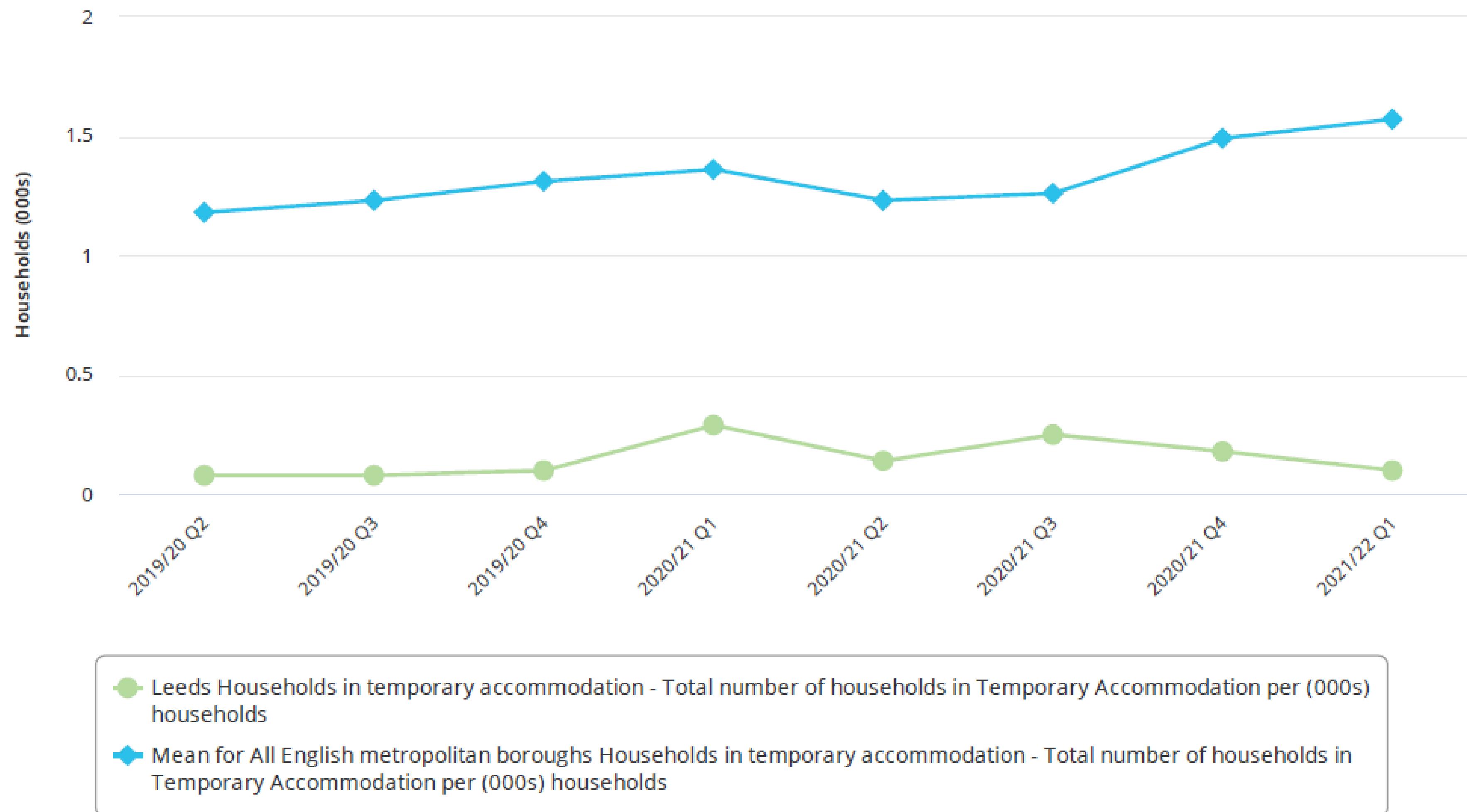
The approach

- We don't want a strategy for 'business as usual'
- Not including things we already do well
- The strategy should guide where we want to get to – the journey
- Should include core commitments that everyone across the city can buy into
- Invitations sent out to small, cross-sector groups around each theme

What we do now

- Works for 90% of the people 90% of the time
- This in itself is a massive achievement
- In October:
 - 2,716 calls
 - 1,071 e-mails
 - 1,253 requests for assessments
 - 2% of all homelessness applications in England
- What about that 10%?

Total number of households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households for Leeds



New themes

Hidden and repeat homelessness

Health and wellbeing support

Having the right accommodation and making it accessible

Having the right services working together in the right way



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Thank you!

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<https://www.basisyorkshire.org.uk>

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