



Shelter NI

Access, Assessment and Plan Policy (Enquiries & Applications Policy)

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INTRODUCTION

The SLATE Project will endeavour to ensure that its support service is allocated in accordance with this policy.

SLATE offers supported accommodation for young people aged between 16 and 25 years who display low to medium support needs who may come from all areas of Northern Ireland, elsewhere in the UK (or other areas as appropriate) and community based support for young people aged between 18 and 25 years who have varying levels of support needs and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless (see Appendix 1).

Support and accommodation is provided for up to 11 young people. Each young person is allocated their own self-contained furnished flat and a drop-in area is available for young people to come together. The service provides a person centred programme of support. The expected minimum length of stay is six months. The maximum permitted duration of stay is for two years. The times are negotiated on an individual basis according to the young person's needs.

A further 6-10 young people can avail of our community based support service which provides the same levels of support as those accommodated by our service.

Each young person is allocated a Support Worker who will support them in assessing their individual needs, in creating a support plan to meet their goals and who will assist them in reviewing the outcomes on a regular basis. The SLATE Project is staffed 12 hours per day, 7 days per week.

AIMS - The SLATE Project aims to:

Provide young people with every opportunity to achieve independent living in a positive and productive manner in co-operation with the community around them to the mutual benefit of all.

Make available to young people an alternative to homelessness and failed tenancies by encouraging the development of a partnership that actively supports young people through engaging them in their own housing and support service programme which is tailored to enable them to make the transition to successful independent living.

OBJECTIVES - In order to meet the above aims the scheme objectives are:

To enable young adults to secure their own accommodation and maximise their opportunity to maintain that accommodation successfully by providing support which is flexible and tailored to meet their needs

To provide secure and safe living for those young people who cannot obtain their own accommodation, along with delivering a flexible and intensive support service that meets the individual needs of those young people.

To develop an agreed programme that empowers young people to develop the skills required to achieve social integration, self-confidence and a greater sense of security.

To encourage the creation of new skills and the motivation required to enable young people to move on to achieve sustainable and permanent housing options and ultimately independent living.

To assist young people to access employment or a suitable programme of training or education relevant to the needs and requirements of the young person.

To liaise with any other person or organisation who can promote independent living for young people.

To act as an advocate on behalf of the young person when necessary.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The SLATE Project is committed to ensuring and promoting equality and opportunity for all. SLATE is therefore opposed to discrimination, unfairness, or harassment on any grounds, including:

- Gender
- Marital status
- Religious belief
- Political opinion
- Disability
- Race or ethnic origin
- Nationality
- Age
- Dependents

A young person's right to be treated with respect and in confidence will be upheld by all employees of the SLATE Project.

SERVICES PROVIDED - The SLATE Project makes available the following support options:

- Assistance to find suitable furnished permanent accommodation
- Supportive temporary furnished accommodation within the local community.
- Assistance in setting up home e.g. connection of utilities.
- Assistance in maintaining the Health, Safety and Security of their accommodation.
- Assisting young people to maintain their tenancies by liaising with local community groups and services.
- Advocate on young people's behalf when dealing with neighbour disputes etc.
- Assist young people to develop domestic, life and social skills and integration.
- Assist young people to budget and better manage their finances.
- Assist with the completion of benefit applications.
- Assist young people to access employment or suitable programmes of education and training.
- Provide emotional support and advice.
- Assist young people in establishing social contacts and activities.
- Assist young people to access other appropriate support services.
- Support young people through the 'moving on' phase and provide advice and support during the settling in period.
- Health and Safety checks including external and communal areas, including window cleaning.
- Fire Safety
- Redecoration of flats on termination
- On call emergency response when locked out
- Cleaning flats for new licences and communal areas
- Repairs, reporting, liaison and delivery
- Maintenance of external communal areas
- Administration of housing management functions

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Young people both male and female from all areas of Northern Ireland, elsewhere in the UK (or other areas as appropriate) are eligible to apply.

To be eligible to receive the services of the SLATE the applicant must meet the following criteria:

- For temporary accommodation based support applicants must be aged 16 – 25 years
- For community based support applicants must be aged 18 – 25 years
- Be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
- Have identified support needs which can be met by the project (see Appendix 1 for definitions of support needs)
- Applicants must be willing to accept the rules and conditions which apply to the service

- Individuals must be willing to establish a personal support plan and work towards the agreed outcomes.
- Applicants must be or applying to be included on N.I.H.E waiting list for housing. In this way applicants are assessed according to their housing needs.

ASSESSMENT

All applicants will be assessed against the above criteria using the SLATE Projects assessment tool. Assessments will take place within a week from referral forms being returned and the appointment will be confirmed in writing. The assessment will take place within the SLATE Project.

The assessment will include an interview with the applicant and a Risk Assessment. It will last about 1 hour. Whilst some of the information requested may seem intrusive, it will only be sought in so far as it is needed to enable an accurate analysis of the services ability to deliver a package of support. This is also an opportunity for the applicant to find out more about the service, view the property where applicable and to decide whether they would like to take it up.

The assessment will be carried out by at least two members of staff, but may also include third parties invited by either the applicant or staff team. (With the applicant's permission). Such third parties would normally be invited in order to facilitate the process of carrying out an effective interview. Examples might include other professionals with more detailed knowledge of the applicant, or difficulties that they experience, e.g. an interpreter or a friend who is able to offer additional support.

Upon completion of the assessment, the assessors will consult further with the SLATE Project Manager and/or other colleagues where complex issues have been identified and the findings will be considered. Following this a decision will be taken as to the appropriateness of the service being offered.

All information received will be treated in the strictest confidence in accordance with Shelter NI's Confidentiality Policy.

ALLOCATION

If following the assessment, it is felt that the applicant meets the criteria as outlined above they will be contacted and informed that they will be offered a service. Whilst this may be done verbally, confirmation will always be put in writing within one week of the assessment.

UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Applicants will only be deemed unsuccessful for the following reasons:

- The individuals assessed needs or risks cannot be met by the service.
- No specific support needs were identified during the assessment.

In all cases applicants, who have been denied a service, have a right to appeal that decision in accordance with the SLATE Projects appeals procedure (Appendix 2). In the first instance, unsuccessful applicants should contact the Project Manager at the address given below.

COMMENCEMENT OF SUPPORT

Where a vacancy exists

The applicant will be notified in writing. A support worker will be allocated and assistance will be given to the individual with the move into their accommodation where applicable. Support will commence at this point.

Where there are no vacancies

The applicant will be notified in writing and they will be entered on the waiting list for accommodation. Community based support will then be offered at this point and will commence immediately with client's agreement.

Where a vacancy becomes available

Allocations will be on a first come basis and will be based on the date the assessment took place. The offer of accommodation will be made in writing to the waiting applicant.

REFERRAL

Referrals can be made either directly by the applicant or on their behalf by a representative from a community, voluntary or statutory agency working in a supportive or caring capacity. Completion of a self-referral or agency referral form will be required. A representative of the agency will be asked to attend the applicant's interview e.g.

- Social Worker
- PBNI
- Youth Justice
- Drug Intervention Programmes
- NHS (GP, Nurse Etc.)
- NIHE
- Student Support Officers
- Other Supported Accommodation Providers

An application pack can be obtained by:

By telephoning the SLATE Project on 028 8225 9000

By e-mail to sleight@shelterni.org

Through our website www.shelterni.org

Access, Assessment and Plan Policy
(Enquiries & Applications Policy)



In writing or in person to:

The SLATE Project
7A Dunbreen Close
Omagh
Co. Tyrone
BT79 7XF

APPENDIX 1 - SUPPORT NEEDS

HIGH SUPPORT NEEDS - Young people likely to fall into this category are:

- Young person displaced from his/her family, community and peer support networks.
- Young person with limited/poor self-esteem.
- Young person with mental health concerns including those who are clinically diagnosed e.g. self-harm.
- Young person excluded from education, training, youth services etc...
- Young person who has gone through multiple accommodation placement breakdowns.
- Young person who exhibits challenging behaviour associated with “high risk” e.g. drug or alcohol misuse.
- Vulnerable young person without support networks. E.g. with a learning disability.
- Young person in conflict with the law.
- A young parent who is having difficulty coping.
- Young person with limited literacy, numeracy, communication and life skills.

MEDIUM SUPPORT NEEDS - Young people likely to fall into this category are:

- Young person who has difficulty maintaining involvement in education and/or training.
- Young person who needs support to develop life skills.
- Young person with emotional support needs i.e. not in “crisis”.
- Young person who may have initial difficulties in settling in to accommodation.
- Young person who has had some preparation for independent living.
- Young person where there is a moderate misuse of alcohol/drugs.
- A young parent who has limited coping skills.
- Young person with a moderate to low learning disability/difficulty.

LOW SUPPORT NEEDS - Young people likely to fall into this category are:

- Young person who has some positive support networks.
- Young person who has had adequate preparation and has some independent living skills.
- Young person who is able to seek support and access services.
- Young person who is engaged in employment, education or training.
- Young person who has established some positive relationships.

APPENDIX 2 - APPEALS PROCESS

If we make a decision about your application for Accommodation and Support and you think the decision is wrong, or you would like further information about our decision, you can do the following:

Ask us to explain our decision in more detail.

You can ask us to look at our decision again by writing to the SLATE Project within one month of having received our letter.

The Area Manager of Shelter NI will deal with the appeal.

The Area Manager will invite you to a meeting discuss your appeal. (*You have the right to be accompanied by a friend, relative, other professional or advocate*).

You will be notified within 14 days of the Area Manager's decision.

If you remain unhappy with the decision you can appeal to the Director of Shelter NI for a final decision.