



Shelter NI

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

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INTRODUCTION

The SLATE Project allocates its support service in accordance with this policy.

SLATE offers supported accommodation for young people aged between 16 and 25 years who generally 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 at one time. 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.

Up to 10 young people can avail of our community-based floating 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 to assess their individual needs, create a support plan to meet their goals and review their 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 an alternative to homelessness and failed tenancies available to young people by encouraging the development of a partnership that actively supports young people through engaging them in the development of their own housing and support service programme, which is tailored 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, but not limited to:

- Sex and Gender Identity
- Sexuality
- 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 offers 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 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 fire safety, external and communal areas, including window cleaning.
- Redecoration of flats on termination/ move-on
- On-call emergency response when locked out

- Cleaning flats for new licensees and communal areas
- Reporting, liaison and delivery of repairs
- Maintenance of external communal areas
- Administration of housing management functions

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Young people of any gender, 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
- Are 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)
- Must be willing to accept the rules and conditions of the service
- Must be willing to establish a personal support plan and work towards the agreed outcomes.
- Must be, or applying to be, included on NIHE waiting list for housing. Applicants are assessed according to their housing needs in this way.

ASSESSMENT

All applicants will be assessed against the above criteria using the SLATE Project's 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 at the SLATE Project's offices.

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 service's 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

Following the assessment, if 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 individual's 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 Project's appeals procedure (see 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 to 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 onto the waiting list for accommodation. Community based support will then be offered at this point and will commence immediately with the client's agreement.

Where a vacancy becomes available

Allocations will be on a 'first come, first served' 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:

- Telephone at 028 82267010
- E-mail to slate@shelterni.org
- Online at www.shelterni.org/project-slate
- 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 displaced from their family, community and peer support networks.
- have limited/poor self-esteem.
- have mental health concerns including those who are clinically diagnosed e.g. self-harm.
- are excluded from education, training, youth services etc.
- have gone through multiple accommodation placement breakdowns.
- exhibit challenging behaviour associated with “high risk” e.g. drug or alcohol misuse.
- are vulnerable and without support networks e.g. has a learning disability.
- conflict with the law.
- are parents and having difficulty coping.
- have limited literacy, numeracy, communication and life skills.

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

- have difficulty maintaining involvement in education and/or training.
- need support to develop life skills.
- have emotional support needs i.e. not in “crisis”.
- may have initial difficulties in settling into accommodation.
- have had some preparation for independent living.
- have a moderate misuse of alcohol/drugs.
- are parents with limited coping skills.
- have a moderate to low learning disability/difficulty.

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

- have some positive support networks.
- have had adequate preparation and some independent living skills.
- are able to seek support and access services.
- are engaged in employment, education or training.
- have 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 contact us for the following:

- Ask us to explain our decision in more detail.
- Ask us to look at our decision again by writing to the SLATE Project within one month of having received our letter. Please write to:

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

The Area Manager of Shelter NI will deal with the appeal. They 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. Please write to:

Tony McQuillan
Shelter NI
58 Howard Street
Belfast
BT1 6PJ