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 display low to medium or medium to high 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 are ready to step down from SLATEs accommodation and move on into their own choice of accommodation with varying levels of support needs (see Appendix 1).

Support and accommodation are 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 safely. 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 step down into the community-based service which provides a continuation of the support received when living in SLATE’s accommodation.

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

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.

# 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.

# 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
 | * NHS (GP, Nurse Etc.)
 |
| * PBNI
 | * NIHE
 |
| * Youth Justice
 | * Student Support Officers
 |
| * Drug Intervention Programmes
 | * 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**

**33 – 35 Castle Street**

**Omagh**

**Co. Tyrone**

**BT78 1DD**

# ASSESSMENT

All applicants will be assessed against the above criteria using the SLATE Project’s assessment tool. Assessments will take place as quickly as possible from referral forms being received. The assessment will take place at the SLATE Project’s offices.

The assessment will include an interview with the applicant and a Needs and Risk Assessment will be completed. It lasts about 1 hour. Whilst some of the information requested may seem intrusive, it will only be sought if it is needed to enable an accurate analysis of the service’s ability to deliver effective support. This is also an opportunity for the applicant to find out more detail about the service and decide if it is the right fit for them.

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 to facilitate the process of carrying out an effective interview. Examples might include other professionals or family members with more detailed knowledge of the applicant, or difficulties that they experience, e.g., a Social Worker or parent/sibling

Upon completion of the assessment, staff 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 our 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.

# COMMENCMENT 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 if necessary. 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.

**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.

# 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

33 – 35 Castle Street

Omagh

Co. Tyrone

BT78 1DB

The Area Manager of Shelter NI (Northern Ireland) will deal with the appeal. They will invite you to a meeting to 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