

Overview

This standard is about providing clients with direct housing information and advice at the point of initial contact with the service. You will establish their needs and expectations of services, research information which is relevant to their situations and provide them with appropriate and accurate legal advice. You will also decide when to refer clients on to alternative or more specialist sources of advice.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. communicate with the client in a manner appropriate to their understanding and needs
2. explain to clients the legal advice services you can offer in line with organisational requirements
3. check that clients' understanding of legal advice services is consistent with information you have provided
4. agree with clients their legal advice requirements in line with relevant legislation, policies and procedures
5. agree with clients any situations which require immediate action and take steps to implement in line with their requirements
6. explain the organisation's systems and procedures for working with clients
7. analyse available client information to assign relevance to their case in line with your professional judgement
8. record client details and agreed actions in line with organisational requirements
9. review sources of information to assess applicability to clients' situations
10. check that information obtained enables you to advise clients
11. analyse information received from clients and the research process to formulate options in line with clients' needs
12. present clients with information and possible options for action in line with organisational requirements
13. advise clients on the implications of possible options in line with organisational requirements
14. check clients' understanding of the advice offered in line with organisational requirements
15. agree actions required by you and clients in line with organisational requirements

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. how to adapt communication styles in ways which are appropriate to the needs of the client
2. the legislative framework affecting provision and entitlement to private and social housing, with particular reference to:
 - 2.1 types of tenure and their implications for tenants and landlords
 - 2.2 housing standards as they relate to residents
3. housing options available based on circumstances and eligibility, with particular reference to:
 - 3.1 residency status of clients
 - 3.2 recognising emergency situations
 - 3.3 giving options to clients
 - 3.4 tests for relevant authority duties
4. considerations in relation to statutory housing allocation, including:
 - 4.1 eligibility
 - 4.2 rules for the application process
 - 4.3 right to a written decision and time limits for challenge
5. rights and entitlements in relation to harassment and eviction
6. the role of statutory enforcement bodies responsible for dealing with discrimination issues
7. the legal remedies for discrimination
8. environmental, health and safety requirements and their impact on housing
9. the definition of homelessness
10. services available to people who are homeless
11. how the wider benefits system affects the ability to access and retain housing
12. procedures for possession in both private and social housing:
 - 12.1 by landlord
 - 12.2 by mortgage provider or secured loan provider
13. how to recognise notice and possession orders and warrants
14. complaints procedures in relation to housing

Provide first line housing legal advice

Developed by Skills for Justice

Version Number 4

Date Approved February 2019

Indicative Review Date February 2024

Validity Current

Status Original

Originating Organisation Skills for Justice

Original URN SFJ IB9

Relevant Occupations Legal Advisers; Legal Associate Professionals

Suite Legal Advice

Keywords First point of contact; referral to specialist advice; provide information; residential; accommodation;
