

Overview

This standard is about providing clients with welfare rights information and advice at the point of initial contact with the service. You will work directly with clients to 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 know when to refer clients on to alternative or more specialist sources of advice. In this standard the term 'welfare benefits' includes means

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1.
communicate with the client in a manner appropriate to their understanding and needs
 - 1.1 explain to clients the legal advice services you can offer in line

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

You need to know and 1. how to adapt communication styles in ways which are appropriate to

the needs of the client

1.
the legislative framework in your jurisdiction relating to welfare benefits
2.
the current structure of the welfare benefits system, including the difference, relationship and interaction between:
 - 3.1 means-tested benefits
 - 3.2 non-means-tested benefits
 - 3.3 contributory benefits
 - 3.4 locally administered welfare schemes
 - 3.5 non-contributory benefits
 - 3.6 passported benefits
3.
statutory bodies involved in the administration of welfare benefits
4.
the eligibility rules for benefits relevant to different client groups
5.
how entitlement may be affected by clients' circumstances
6.
how to calculate benefit entitlement for clients
7.
how to make benefit claims, taking account of:
 - 8.1 the procedure for making claims
 - 8.2 which department of organisations are responsible
 - 8.3 time limits
 - 8.4 rules and time limits for backdating and late claims
 - 8.5 relevant evidence
8.
how to recognise cases where benefits may be being overpaid or

underpaid

9.

how to keep up to date with major changes in legislation or benefit regulations and how this impacts on advice

10.

the appropriate options for maximising benefit income

11.

the legal position and action required by your organisation when clients are claiming fraudulently

12.

appeals procedures, and options for challenging welfare benefits decisions

13.

procedures for transferring from one benefit to another including transitional protection

14.

the range of local support services and concessions available to clients

15.

sources of financial assistance and how to assist with applications, including:

16.1 social security payments

16.2 payments from other statutory bodies

16.3 charities

16.4 passported benefits

16.5 educational benefits

16.6 health benefits

SFJIB19



Provide first line welfare rights legal advice

Developed by	Skills for Justice
Version Number	3
Date Approved	01 Feb 2019
Indicative Review Date	01 Feb 2024
Validity	Current
Status	Original
Originating Organisation	Skills for justice
Original URN	sfj ib19
Relevant Occupations	Legal Advisers, Legal Associate Professionals
Suite	Legal Advice
Keywords	First point of contact; Referral to specialist advice; Provide information
