

Client Services Charter

Authority:

Issue Date:

November 2018

Review Date:

November 2021

POLICY

Seniors Rights Victoria aims for a just, equitable, and inclusive society in which the human rights of older people are respected and upheld.

Elder abuse can be a form of family violence and includes acts which causes harm to an older person and is carried out by someone they know and trust such as a family member or friend. The abuse may be physical, social, financial, psychological or sexual and can include mistreatment and neglect. For information on what constitutes elder abuse, see our website at <https://seniorsrights.org.au/>

Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) is a specialist statewide Community Legal Centre (CLC) that provides free information, legal advice, advocacy, support, policy reform and education to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older people.

Our services include a state-wide helpline, specialist legal service, short-term support and advocacy. We are able to deliver professional education to the greater community, as well as provide leadership on policy and law reform and collaborate with other organisations to raise awareness of elder abuse.

Who do we assist?

We assist any Victorian aged 60 and over (or any Indigenous Victorian aged 45 and above) on matters relating to elder abuse and mistreatment. We may also assist people approaching 60 years of age with age related disabilities, challenges or illnesses.

What we assist with:

- Intervention Orders, including requesting the perpetrator be removed from the shared home (elder abuse is a form of family violence and intervention orders are often an available option)
- Arrangements involving the exchange of assets in return for the promise of care including 'family care', 'assets for care' and 'granny flat' arrangements
- Situations involving adult children who return home to live or who never leave home

- Behaviour that is overly restrictive of a person's ability to make their own lifestyle decisions, including inappropriate exercises of power under a Power of Attorney for personal matters
- Financial Abuse including:
 - Debts and loans
 - Misuse of financial Powers of Attorney
 - Transfer of property
 - Co-ownership disputes
- Advice regarding disputes about contact with grandchildren
- Guardianship and Administration issues
- Advice about future planning to protect against elder abuse, including Powers of Attorney

What we cannot assist with:

- Neighbourhood disputes
- Family Law
- Consumer law
- Complaints about aged care providers
- Drafting of POA's and/or Wills (unless a case is open and a new Will or Power of Attorney is needed to prevent further abuse occurring)
- Probate and administration of estates
- Pensions
- Criminal law
- Infringement matters

What you can expect from us

We will:

- act honestly, ethically and with professionalism at all times
- treat you with courtesy, respect and understanding
- be sensitive to cultural and linguistic diversity
- provide interpreters and/or other assistance to ensure effective communication
- respond promptly to your request for service
- keep you advised on the progress of your case or enquiry
- recognise your rights to dignity, respect privacy and confidentiality
- respond to your requests for information in a way that is easy to understand
- keep your information private and confidential, except where you agree that it can be disclosed or where we are required by law to give information to others.
- archive files for seven years, as required by law; at the end of seven years, files are usually destroyed.

What we expect from you

For you to:

- communicate your needs with courtesy and respect
- provide complete and accurate details and information
- ask for clarification of any information you don't understand
- accept responsibility for any decisions you make or actions you take
- not communicate directly with the other party to the dispute about the dispute

Terminating our services

You can terminate your engagement with us verbally or in writing at any time.

We may terminate our service if:

- you fail to provide us with sufficient instructions, withhold important information or repeatedly fail to attend appointments
- you unreasonably fail to follow our advice
- you are abusive towards our staff or you fail to treat our staff with courtesy and respect
- the scope of the work required to be undertaken changes to an extent where we can no longer assist you
- we form the view that your matter no longer has reasonable prospects of success
- we no longer have the resources to assist you. If this occurs, we will try to refer you to another service
- you are no longer capable of providing us with instructions
- you fail to provide the appropriate level of cooperation in dealing with your matter
- a conflict of interest arises which prevents us from continuing to act; or
- your financial circumstances change significantly so that you are able to pay or make contribution towards legal costs elsewhere.

Complaints and Feedback

We welcome all forms of feedback, including complaints about the service we provide. The process for providing compliments, complaints or feedback is documented in our Complaints and Feedback Form. For a copy of the form, please send your request to info@seniorsrights.org.au or telephone (03) 9655 2109

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Author	Comments
October 2021	1.2	L. Dundon & L. Best	Review
November 2021		Rebecca Edwards	Reviewed.