

SIGNPOST STOCKPORT FOR CARERS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Definition of a complaint:

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the organisation's action or lack of action, or about the standard of the service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the organisation itself, or a person or body acting on behalf of the organisation.

This document details Signpost Stockport for Carers overarching policy on dealing with complaints received from clients. Signpost Stockport for Carers is committed to providing consistently high quality services, and although the majority of the time our services are provided to very high standards, occasionally things do go wrong.

We welcome feedback from our clients, and complaints are a valuable source of information to help us to:

- Improve the standard of services we deliver;
- Put things right when they have gone wrong;
- Learn from our mistakes.

Aim:

The aim of this procedure is to provide a fair, consistent and structured two stage process for our clients if they are dissatisfied with a service they have received.

Emphasis will be placed on resolving complaints as quickly as possible by the service. We will ensure our staff are equipped to deal with complaints efficiently and effectively, and lessons learnt from complaint investigations will be used to directly inform service improvements.

How to complain

A person can make a complaint in a number of ways –

- Complete the "Have your Say" feedback form:
- Telephone us on 0161 442 0442,
- Email us at info@signpostforcarers.org.uk ,
- Visit our website - www.signpostforcarers.org.uk
- Write to us at: Signpost Stockport for Carers, The Heaton Centre, Thornfield Road, Heaton Moor, Stockport. SK4 3LD

What you can expect

Clients can expect to receive a consistently high quality service when they contact any member of staff with a complaint. We will deal with all complaints promptly, with courtesy and efficiency.

When a client wishes to complain about our services, they can expect:

- Their complaint to be recorded and dealt with immediately if possible.
- If not possible, an acknowledgement of their complaint within two working days informing them of who will be dealing with their complaint and the likely timescales involved.

- To be kept informed about progress of the investigation into their complaint.
- Appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.

When dealing with complaints we will:

- Treat all complaints seriously and confidentially;
- Act impartially, objectively and professionally;
- Ensure that complainants are not treated adversely because they have complained about a service;
- Maintain a record of all complaints received;
- Monitor the nature of complaints to identify any weaknesses in service delivery;
- Learn lessons from complaints to continually develop and improve our services; and
- Monitor and report our performance in complaint handling against agreed targets.

Accessibility

Signpost is committed to equal opportunities and our aim is to make our complaints policy easy to use and accessible to all of our clients. It will be widely publicised, available in a variety of formats on request.

Staff will provide information on the complaints procedure for clients wishing to make a complaint and provide any assistance they may require, for example:

- Assisting with completion of a feedback form;
- Completing a feedback form on your behalf;
- Making appropriate arrangements for clients who may have specific requirements e.g. British Sign Language interpreter, wheelchair access etc;
- Arranging for the services of an interpreter in any spoken language.

We monitor the use of the policy for equality and diversity purposes to ensure it is being accessed by all areas of the community.

Third party reporting & Advocates.

If you feel that you need help in raising your concerns, we are happy to liaise with a 3rd party on your behalf, for example:

- Advice organisations;
- Professionals such as social workers, community psychiatric nurses or doctors, solicitors;
- Family members or friends;
- MPs and elected members of the Council - clients' own MPs and elected members are assumed to have consent to act and information can be disclosed in response to their enquiries;

Confidentiality

All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

The stages of the complaints procedure

Stage 1

Stage 1 of the process is the initial acknowledgement, recording and investigation of the complaint.

The majority of complaints will be resolved at this stage. The response is to be signed off by the Director.

Where a complaint remains unresolved, the Signpost Director can review and attempt to resolve it before proceeding to stage 2.

Stage 2

This stage of the process is an investigation, carried out by the Signpost Board of Directors. The response is to be signed off by the Chairperson or their nominated deputy.

Timescales for handling a complaint that has been referred to the Board

- Confirmation of referral within 2 working days
- Full response within 25 working days

Extending time limits

We aim to complete all complaints within the timescales above. However, if a complaint is very complex it may occasionally be necessary to extend the time limit. If this is the case, we will keep the complainant informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and inform them of the new deadline.

Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints are unlikely to be effectively dealt with since the service needs to correspond with and, in some cases, meet with the complainant in order to address their concerns. However, these complaints will still be recorded and investigated by the service involved in order to identify possible areas for service improvement. When taking details of a complaint, staff should always encourage clients to provide their identity in order for their complaint to be effectively processed.

Partnerships

With cross-cutting complaints that relate to Signpost and another organisation, then all parties should treat the complaint in accordance with their complaints procedure but must act to coordinate decisions and responses to the complainant.

Lessons learnt

Part of a remedy may be to ensure that changes are made to policies, procedures, systems, staff training or all of these, to ensure that the maladministration or poor service is not repeated. It is important to ensure that lessons learnt are put into practice.

Quality of service is an important measure of the effectiveness of Signpost. Learning from complaints is a powerful way of helping to develop the service and increase trust among the people who use it. We have systems to:

- Record, analyse and report on the outcomes of complaints and remedies ;
- Apply the information to improve customer service.

Exclusions

Although this policy covers complaints relating to the majority of services provided by, or on behalf of, Signpost it does not cover:

- a complaint where the client has started legal proceedings or there is a right of redress in

law and where it is reasonable to have expected the complainant to have pursued that course of action;

- complaints about personnel matters, including the recruitment process, disciplinary and grievances issues;
- a complaint which the complainant knew of more than 12 months before he or she officially complained;
- complaints regarding insurance claims;
- complaints about the chairperson of Signpost's Board of Directors;
- allegations of criminal behaviour or financial impropriety;
- complaints about policies of Signpost Stockport for Carers;
- complaints not falling into any of the above but the circumstances are analogous to any of the above.

A service in receipt of a complaint which for any reason cannot be considered under this policy will provide an explanation to the complainant and advice on the appropriate route to follow.

Staff training and support

Signpost provides guidance and support for staff on use of the policy and dealing with complaints to ensure all staff are equipped with the necessary skills to deal with complaints effectively.

This includes:

- staff briefings – general information on the policy for any member of staff dealing with a client complaint;
- Specific Complaints Training.

Monitoring and performance reporting

All details of the complaint are to be recorded on a complaint monitoring form and the details recorded on the complaint monitoring spreadsheet. Information gained from complaints can be a valuable tool in identifying the needs of our clients and developing our services to meet those needs.

The Signpost Board of Directors has overall responsibility for monitoring and reporting performance in complaints, handling and resolution.

The quality of the investigations carried out and the action plans developed following an investigation will be monitored and improved by random sample checking of investigations. Responsibility for quality assurance of complaint investigations rests with the Chair of the Signpost Board, thus providing top level oversight.

Review and evaluation

To ensure the efficiency of the Complaints procedure, following the process staff will be asked to complete a small report highlighting how the procedure has aided/hindered the investigation and process with a view to identifying improvements.

In order to ensure we continue to provide the best possible complaints handling service for our clients, this policy will be subject to ongoing evaluation and review by the Signpost Board of Directors.

Complainants will be contacted following completion of the investigation into their complaint, to

encourage them to provide feedback on ease of use of the complaints procedure and their satisfaction with the way in which their complaint was dealt with. The results will provide valuable information to ensure we continue to improve our services and identify areas for improvement.

Version Control

Version No	Date	Author	Change description	Signed off
1.0	19/05/10	Nigel greaves	Review – New version 1.1	
1.1	24/10/12	Katie Smith	New policy approval to Vn 2.0	Board 16/3/13
2.0	16/01/13	Katie Smith	New Policy	16/03/13
2.1	21/03/18	Katie Smith	Review – Change to terminology to ensure use of “client” in all circumstances	
3.0	16/05/18	Katie Smith	Policy approved	Signpost Board 16/05/18
3.1	15/1/20	Julia Hewer	Grammatical changes	
4.0	15/03/2022	DM	Review. Data Protection Act updated to 2018	

Complaint Monitoring Form.

For completion by: Member of staff (if at stage 1 of the procedures) or a member of management (if at stage 2).

Name of Complainant:.....
Complaint Ref:.....
Date of Complaint:.....

Description of Complaint:.....

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Please describe how the complaint has been dealt with:.....

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Did the complaint require any follow up action following the resolution of the complaint?

No ____ Yes ____

Did the follow up action involve changes to procedures or arrangements within the project?

No ____ Yes ____

If the answer to either of the above 2 questions is YES, what action have you instigated to ensure that such a complaint will not happen again?

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Was the complaint concerned with Ethnicity, Gender or Disability?

Ethnicity ____ Gender ____ Disability ____

If YES please give details:

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Signature of member of staff (if used for stage 1 Complaint).....

Signature of Project Manager (if used for stage 2 Complaint).....

Date:.....

“Have Your Say”

Please complete this form to make a suggestion, a comment or to complain about our services

I would like to make a:

Comment/Suggestion

Compliment

Complaint

Name of the service that you wish to comment on:

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My comment/compliment/complaint is: (please put as much detail here as you can)

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Your Details:

First Name *

Your Surname *

Your Address *

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Your Postcode *

Your email address *

Date *

Monitoring our equal opportunities policy.

We want to make sure that our services are fair and accessible to everyone. The following information helps us to check that this is the case.

You do not have to fill in this part of the form and it will not, in any way, affect how your comment, suggestion or complaint is processed.

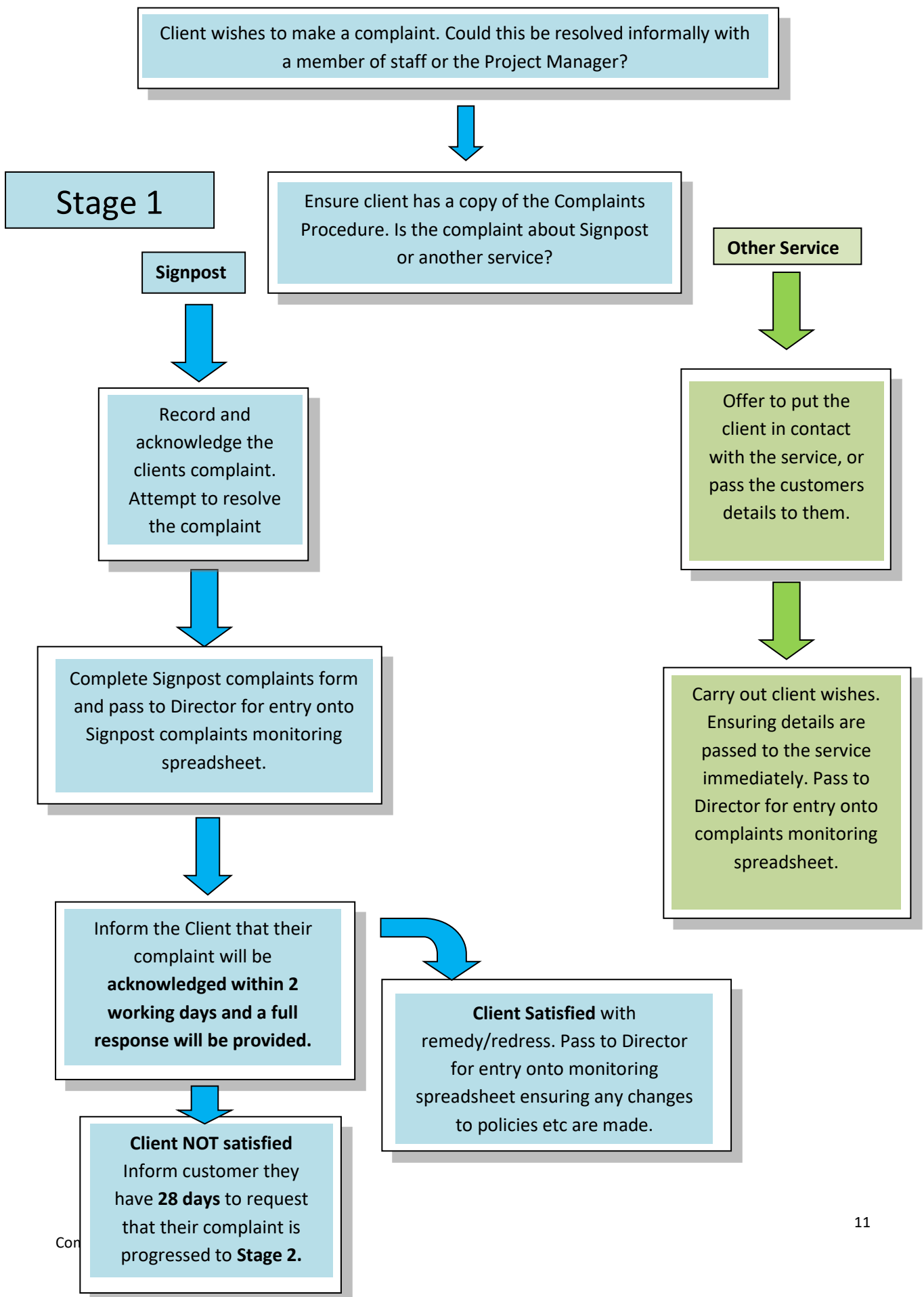
Are you:

Male Female
18 -24 25- 34 35-44 45 – 54
54-64 65 Plus

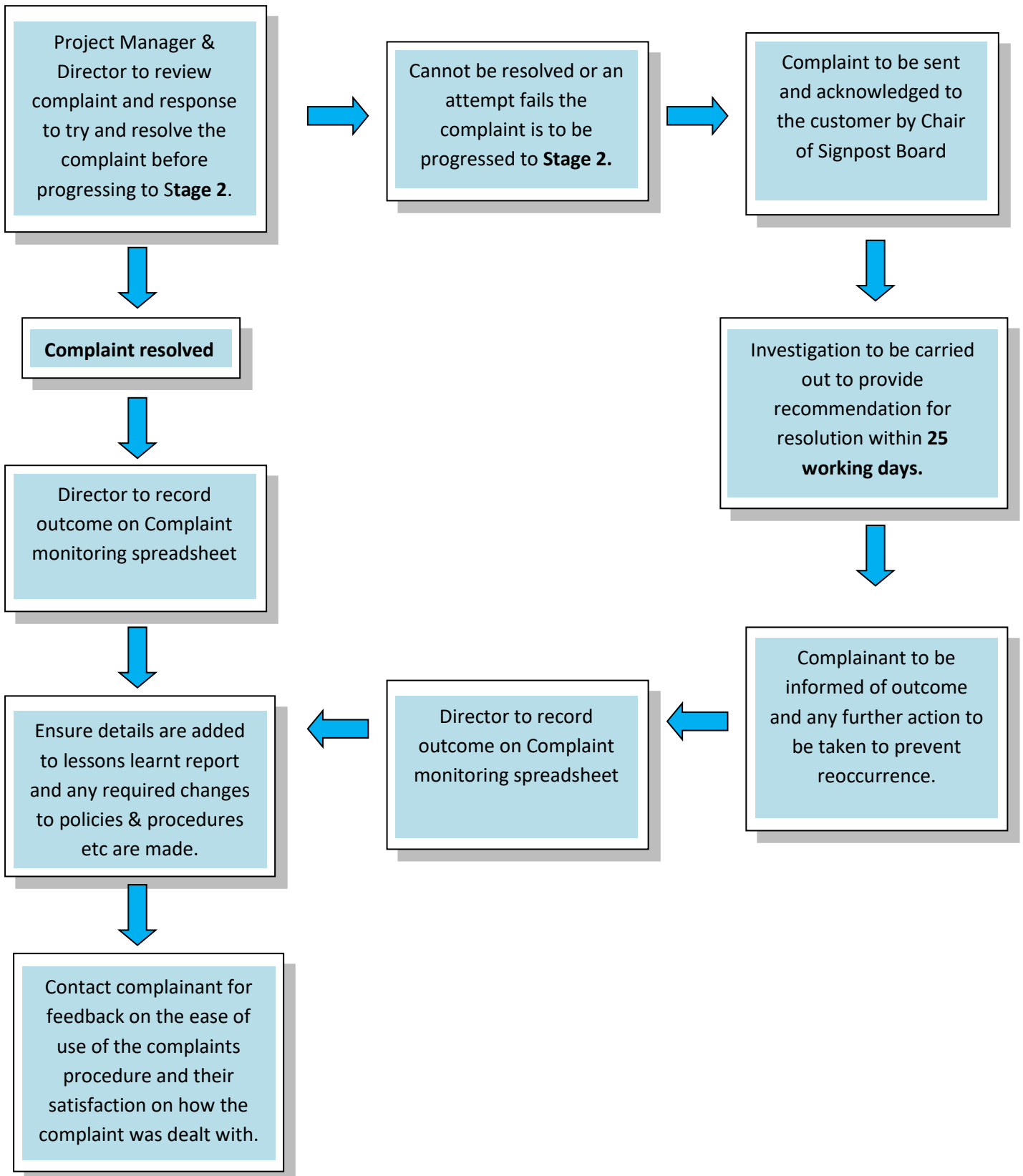
White Mixed Ethnicity Asian or Asian British
Black or Black British Chinese or other Ethnic Group

Thank you for completing this form, you will receive written acknowledgement within 2 working days of receipt.

Client Complaint Flow Chart for Staff use.



↓ Progress to stage 2



Client Complaints Procedure Flow Chart.

