

Complaints Policy

(Interim document, August 2023, pending review and sign off by Customer Services Committee and Group Board)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out our approach to complaints.
- 1.2 We view complaints as a valuable source of feedback and learning for our services , helping to drive improvement and maintain a positive relationship with our customers.
- 1.3 Sometimes things go wrong, and when they do, we will try to put things right as soon as we can. We're committed to understanding what's gone wrong and making positive improvements to our services as a result.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all customers who live in our homes, applicants for a property owned or managed by A2Dominion, and any person acting on behalf of a resident with their consent.
- 1.5 This policy complies with the following regulatory and good practice standards:
 - Housing Ombudsman [Complaint Handling Code](#)
 - Regulator of Social Housing Regulatory Standards ([Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard](#))
 - Localism Act 2011

2. Policy aims and objectives

- 2.1 This policy aims to ensure:
 - A2Dominion provides clear and transparent information about our approach to managing and responding to complaints
 - A2Dominion provides a good and reliable service to all our customers and to treat all feedback as a learning opportunity to improve services in the future

For a copy of this policy in an alternative format, such as large print or a translation, please contact our Customer Contact Centre by calling 0800 432 0077 or via our website (www.a2dominion.co.uk/contact)

3. What is a complaint?

3.1 We define a complaint as:

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by A2Dominion, its employees, or those acting on its behalf (such as contractors), affecting an individual customer or group of customers. Customers do not have to use the word complaint for an enquiry to be treated as such.

Our customers drive the complaints process (all complaints are initiated by customers raising concerns with us) and we are responsible for managing the process. Our colleagues will proactively engage in our complaint process and if further enquiries are needed to resolve a matter or at the customer's request, the issue must always be logged as a complaint and treated as a complaint according to this process.

4. What we will deal with through this policy

4.1 Customers can complain about our standard of service, actions, or lack of action by us or anyone working for us (such as contractors).

4.2 There may be times when an issue can be put right 'there and then' and with an apology. These won't be dealt with through our formal complaints process unless a customer asks us to do so.

4.3 There are some things that we will not deal with through our complaints policy. The following are not covered through this policy:

- Neighbour dispute or reports of anti-social behaviour (our approach is set out in our anti-social behaviour policy), unless customers are unhappy with our response to these.
- Complaints that are already being managed. This includes where legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- Situations where legal or regulatory action has already been taken and a determination has already been made, including through our complaints process or through the [Housing Ombudsman](#).
- Insurance claims and appeals including damage to personal possessions and personal injury accidents which should be referred to the relevant insurers. However, a complaint about A2Dominion's standard of service can still be made.
- If the complaint is disputing the service charge we have set. Customers may resolve the dispute either directly with A2Dominion or through the courts (First Tier Tribunal). However, this does not prevent customers raising their complaint with the [Housing Ombudsman](#).

- Anonymous complaints. However, we will record these to help us to improve our services

If a customer's complaint can't be dealt with through this policy, due to it being listed as one of the exclusions above, we'll provide a detailed explanation setting out the reasons why a matter is not suitable for the complaints process. We'll also provide information on their right to take that decision to the Housing Ombudsman.

- 4.4 Anyone can make a complaint about the services that we, or anyone working for us (such as contractors), provide. We have two stages to our complaints process, as described below: Stage 1 and Stage 2. Non-residents can access Stage 1 only of our process and do not have access to the Housing Ombudsman Service. If they are unhappy with the outcome, their recourse is the same as other private individuals i.e. the courts.
- 4.5 Representatives or third parties can act on the behalf of a customer with the customer's approval. A2Dominion will deal with the complaint in the same way as if the customer had raised it directly.

5. How to complain

5.1 Complaints can be made in a number of ways:

- Through our online customer portal [My Account](#) which is available on our website (www.a2dominion.co.uk)
- Through an [online complaint form](#) if you don't have a customer account
- By telephone on 0800 432 0077
- By email at complaints@a2dominion.co.uk
- Through our online Live Chat (Monday- Friday) service on our customer website (www.a2dominion.co.uk)
- Through our social media channel/s (Twitter – A2Dominion chat)
- To a member of staff, for example a neighbourhood officer or support worker
- In writing to:

Complaints & Resolution Service
A2Dominion Group
113 Uxbridge Road
Ealing
London W5 5TL

- 5.2 All complaints should be made within six months of the issue happening.
- 5.3 A2Dominion will provide a complaints service that is accessible to all customers. We retain the right, where we consider complainant actions to be unacceptable,

to restrict or change access to our service. See our Unacceptable Actions by Complainants policy for more detail.

6. Our complaint handling standards

- 6.1 A2Dominion's Complaints and Resolution service is responsible for handling complaints. The person handling the complaints will have appropriate skills and no conflict of interest with the complaint they are investigating.
- 6.2 A2Dominion has a two stage complaint process. The table below sets out our timescales for responding to complaints:

Activity	Timescale
We acknowledge and log the complaint acknowledged and logged	Within 5 working days
We provide a response to the Stage 1 complaint	Within 10 working days of a stage 1 complaint being logged
We provide a response to the Stage 2 response	Within 20 working days of a stage 2 complaint being escalated

Stage 1: initial complaint

- 6.3 When a complaint is made, we will acknowledge and log it within five working days.
- 6.4 We will carry out a non-biased investigation and we aim to share a comprehensive answer within 10 working days of the complaint being logged.
- 6.5 Where we're unable to respond to a Stage 1 complaint within 10 working days, we will agree any extension with the person raising the complaint. We will then respond within 20 working days and provide regular updates.

Stage 2: Escalating your complaint

- 6.6 If a customer is not happy with the way we've dealt with a complaint or our decision at Stage 1 they should let us know within 20 working days of the stage 1 decision if they wish to move to Stage 2. See the section on [how to complain](#) for contact information.

- 6.7 We will accept a request to escalate the complaint to the next stage unless an exclusion applies (see [section 4](#)). A2Dominion will not add new information on the complaint at Stage 2. New information may be treated as a new complaint.
- 6.8 We will aim to provide a response to complaints escalated to Stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated.
- 6.9 Where A2Dominion is unable to respond to a Stage 2 complaint within this time we will agree an extension with the person raising the complaint. A2Dominion will respond within 30 working days we'll provide regular updates.
- 6.10 If the resident is unhappy once the complaints process has been exhausted, A2Dominion will signpost to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

7 Putting things right

- 7.1 Where something has gone wrong A2Dominion will acknowledge this and share the actions already taken, or those we intend to take, to put things right. These may include:
- Apologising
 - Explaining what happened
 - Reconsidering or changing a decision
 - Amending a record
 - Changing policies, procedures, or practices
- 7.2 A2Dominion will consider compensation if it is found that service delivery did not meet our expected standards.
- 7.3 Compensation will reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the resident as a result. A2Dominion will also consider and out of pocket expenses caused by the complaint event. Please see A2Dominion's Compensation Policy for further detail.
- 7.4 Where appropriate, we may consider discretionary compensation for damage to personal belongings, in addition to signposting to our insurers.

8 Housing Ombudsman Service

- 8.1 A complaint can be raised with the Housing Ombudsman Service at any stage of the process for an independent review of the case.
- 8.2 The Housing Ombudsman service can be contacted in the following ways:
- Online: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents
 - Telephone: 0300 111 3000
 - Email: info@housingombudsman.org.uk
 - In writing to:

Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ

9 Learning and improvement

- 9.1 A2Dominion promotes a positive complaint handling culture. We have processes in place to make sure we gather learning from complaints and use this insight to make positive changes to our services.
- 9.2 A2Dominion will share our learning from complaints with our customers, colleagues and through our Customer Annual Report.
- 9.3 A2Dominion completes an annual complaints self-assessment sharing how well we think we're performing against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. Complaint self-assessments can be found on [A2Dominion's website](#).

10 Consulting on this policy

- 10.1 This policy has been developed and updated informed by feedback from customers about our complaint handling. It has also been consulted with our Customer Services Committee and Resident Scrutiny Panel.
- 10.2 This policy was also developed in consultation internally across A2Dominion, including operations, policy, and communications teams.

11 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

- 11.1 A2Dominion Group, colleagues, partners, stakeholders, and contractors are committed to providing services, which are relevant and appropriate to the needs of people. We will treat others fairly and without discrimination.
- 11.2 We will make sure that all our services relating to this policy are accessible and available for all customers as set out in the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 11.3 We have undertaken an equality impact assessment for this policy.

12 Data Protection Statement

- 12.1 The protection of personal data is of great importance to A2Dominion Group and more than just a legal obligation.
- 12.2 A2Dominion Group and affiliate organisations are the data controllers registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) with the following registration numbers:

- A2Dominion Housing Group Limited: Z4843307
- A2Dominion Homes Limited: Z9799978
- A2Dominion South Limited: Z7835340
- A2Dominion Housing Options Limited: Z5412073
- A2Dominion Residential Limited: Z3391351
- A2Dominion Developments Limited: ZA103931
- Pyramid Plus London LLP: Z3594227
- Pyramid Plus South LLP: Z3594230

- 12.3 Our data protection policy and procedures are governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. We collect and process personal information in order to provide housing services and meet our contractual and legal obligations. All persons authorised to receive personal data are obliged to handle personal data in accordance with applicable laws and regulations at all times.
- 12.4 For information on how we collect, store, process, and use customers' personal data, please visit our website on <https://www.a2dominiongroup.co.uk/privacy-and-cookie-policy>.
- 12.5 For employee related privacy statement, please contact our HR team at hrenquiries@a2dominion.co.uk.
- 12.6 You can also contact the Data Protection Officer / Data Compliance team at governance@a2dominion.co.uk

13 Associated documents

- Compensation policy
- Complaints procedure
- Unacceptable Actions by Complainants policy
- Anti-social behaviour policy

14 Document information

Responsible Director	Executive Director (Operations)
Owner	The Complaints and Resolution Service
Policy author:	Head of Complaints and Resolution
Approved by:	Executive Management Team (and provided to our Customer Services Committee for consultation) and Group Board
Date approved:	August 2023
Date of next review:	August 2026
Regulatory link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulator of Social Housing <u>Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard</u>• Localism Act 2011
Publish	To be published in full on external website