

# Making Changes to your Home Policy

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 We frequently receive requests from tenants who want to make changes or alterations to their homes. This policy sets out how we will respond to these requests.
- 1.2 The Making Changes to Your Home Policy applies to general needs, care and support and leasehold housing. It does not apply to keyworker or student housing.
- 1.3 Any tenant wishing to carry out a major change, improvement or alteration must apply and obtain our permission in writing before starting any work.
- 1.4 Any improvements or alterations requiring written approval that are undertaken without written permission will be considered a breach of tenancy therefore at risk of legal action.
- 1.5 Special provision is made in Sections 97-101 of the Housing Act 1985 and The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulation 1994 (SI 1994 N0.163) for secure tenants to have the right to make improvements to their homes and to claim compensation for improvements they make in certain circumstances.
- 1.6 There are no equivalent legal provisions for assured tenants, however, we will grant assured tenants the equivalent rights of secure tenants as determined by their tenancy agreements and this policy.
- 1.7 Leaseholders and freeholders are (subject to the terms of their lease) free to make alterations within their home. They are not permitted to make any alteration outside their home without the express consent of the freeholder or superior lessee, fully documented.

**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](http://www.a2dominion.co.uk/contact))**

## 2. Policy aims and objectives

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all requests for changes, improvements, or modifications are addressed promptly, consistently, and are properly documented.
- 2.2 All requests for changes, improvements or alterations must meet the quality and security of the Group's assets.

## 3. Classifications

- 3.1 This document classifies alterations into the following categories:

<b>Exempt alterations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• That don't need written permission.</li></ul>
<b>Permitted alterations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where no written permission is required but reinstatement (prior to end of tenancy) is required.</li><li>• Where written permission is required but reinstatement is not required (in some cases compensation may be payable).</li><li>• Where written permission is required, and reinstatement is required.</li></ul>
<b>Non-permitted alterations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alterations that are never permitted.</li></ul>

## 4. Reinstatement

- 4.1 Reinstatement means that the tenant must restore the part of the home affected by the alteration to a condition where it is deemed suitable for an incoming tenant.
- 4.2 The level of reinstatement will be at the discretion of A2Dominion and based upon our lettable standard.
- 4.3 If a tenant leaves the home after making approved improvements or alterations, we may:
- Accept the alterations and pay compensation to the tenant or the tenant's representative.
  - Require the tenant to reinstate, returning the home to its original condition.
  - Undertake reinstatement itself and recharge the tenant for costs in doing so.

## 5. Exempt alterations

- 5.1 These are alterations that are permitted without written approval by A2Dominion. We will not repair or service these alterations.

- 5.2 In some cases you may need to have a current asbestos survey before making any changes. For example, if you are making changes to ceilings, walls or cupboards. You should contact us for advice before carrying out these works to avoid any risk to your health.

5.2.1	Decorations to internal painted surfaces. We may recharge if not in line with the lettable standard.
5.2.2	TV aerials and connections provided and installed by a competent contractor.
5.2.3	Fitting of gas cookers (within the designated space provided by A2Dominion) provided it is undertaken by a GAS SAFE registered fitter and maintained by the tenant.
5.2.4	Replacement of existing taps installed by a qualified plumber. Reinstatement Is not required unless the taps left are unacceptable as assessed by our staff against our lettable standard.
5.2.5	Fitting additional battery powered smoke or heat detectors.
5.2.6	Fitted wardrobes, cupboards and shelving. We may recharge if not in line with the lettable standard.
5.2.7	Replacements of light fittings that do not require alterations to the existing electrical wiring circuits (if they are undertaken by a qualified electrician).
5.2.8	Replacement of internal doors or door furniture, except doors to kitchens or any other doors that provide safety against the spread of fire. Residents should contact us if uncertain.

## 6. Permitted subject to reinstatement

- 6.1 These are improvements or alterations that are permitted without written approval. However, tenants are required to remove them and reinstate to our lettable standard at any time upon request.
- 6.2 We may assess if an asbestos survey should be carried out before agreeing to the alterations where appropriate.
- 6.3 If tenants do not reinstate, we will do this and the tenants may be recharged. We will not repair or service these alterations.

6.3.1	Fitting of laminate flooring or any other floor finishes, not supplied by A2Dominion. Permitted in houses and in ground floor flats. Residents are responsible for lifting and relaying the laminate should access be required to the flooring beneath for repair work. Fitting of laminate flooring is not permitted in bathrooms and kitchens.
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6.3.2	Fitting of built-in hobs and ovens, if this utilises the cooker space within the original kitchen layout and works are undertaken by a competent electrician or a gas engineer.
6.3.3	Addition of kitchen units and worktops provided the original fittings are unaltered and undamaged.
6.3.4	Garden ponds (where residents have exclusive use of the garden).
6.3.5	Garden sheds, pergolas or other structures that do not involve the construction of walling, concrete or masonry bases.
6.3.6	Fitting of burglar alarms, additional locks or other security measures.
6.3.7	Fitting of additional external lighting.
6.3.8	Cat or dog flaps to external doors in houses where there is an enclosed garden.
6.3.9	Additional non-gas heating or cooling systems. The tenant will be expected to maintain such systems.

## 7. Alterations for which written permission is required, reinstatement not required

- 7.1 These are alterations that are permitted with written approval by A2Dominion. Written approval will usually be subject to conditions being applied. For example, replacement of kitchen and bathroom would be to our planned maintenance specification or equivalent.
- 7.2 Provided that written approval is granted, and the works are verified by us, then there will be no requirement to reinstate at the end of the tenancy. After 2 years (from date of approval), we would assume responsibility for the ongoing maintenance.
- 7.3 A2Dominion will charge for its costs in assessing and verifying alterations in this category. Any professional fees will be paid by the resident.

7.3.1	Fitting of over-bath showers. Tenants will be required to fit additional tiling and other protection against water damage as specified by A2Dominion.
7.3.2	Replacement of bathroom. Permission will not be given for level access showers above ground floor in flats where there is no communal lift.
7.3.3	Replacement of kitchen. We may refuse permission if we have replaced the kitchen as part of the voids or planned works within the last 5 years.
7.3.4	Replacement of external doors or windows.
7.3.5	The building of a porch, conservatory, extension or loft conversion.

7.3.6	Removal or alteration of the structure of the building that would require the approval of the local planning authority or building control.
7.3.7	Works within the gardens or external areas of houses that involve new walling, concrete or masonry structures.
7.3.8	Any alterations or actions intended to create additional car parking spaces. A vehicular crossover must be applied for from the Highway Authority and be in place.
7.3.9	The planting of trees and shrubs, including leylandii shrubs that can be expected to exceed 3 meters in height if left to grow naturally.
7.3.10	The cutting down of trees and shrubs exceeding 3m in height.
7.3.11	Any planting, fencing or other structures exceeding 1m in height within the external space of housing that is not fully enclosed. Primarily, front or street facing gardens.

## 8. Alterations that are never permitted

8.1 These are improvements and alterations that will not be permitted by A2Dominion. If a tenant undertakes these alterations we may take appropriate action to reinstate or remedy any damage caused and may recharge the tenant.

8.1.2	Any improvements or alterations affecting communal areas of estates, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The external area of an apartment block, including doors, windows and TV or satellite aerials.</li> <li>• Communal spaces within blocks of flats.</li> <li>• Communal external areas.</li> </ul>
8.1.2	Where there is a risk of disturbing asbestos, if advised by A2Dominion.
8.1.3	Conversions of garages / outbuildings into habitable space or for business use.
8.1.4	Changing windows into doors or doors into windows.
8.1.5	Fitting a hob or oven into an existing kitchen unit or worktop where the existing cooker location is not utilised.
8.1.6	Changes to electrical circuits within the internal areas of a home unless as part of an approved extension/conversion.
8.1.7	Fencing off external space that is not fully enclosed (primarily, front or street facing gardens).
8.1.8	Installation of wood burning fires/stoves, solar panels, ground source heating in the home.

## 9. The application process

9.1 We aim to assess all applications within 10 working days of receiving the required documentation. Applications will **not** be approved if:

- The tenancy status is not secure or assured.
- There are rent arrears.
- There is a breach of the tenancy conditions or there is an outstanding possession order.

9.2 As part of the application the tenant will be requested to submit:

- The specification of work.
- Drawings and photographs of the area where work will be carried out.
- Confirmation that the proposed work does not require building control approval or planning permission.
- A method statement for execution of the work to demonstrate that work will be undertaken in a safe manner and minimise disturbance to neighbours.
- Any associated professional documentation or fees.

9.3 We will not unreasonably withhold permission but reserve the right to attach conditions to any request received.

9.4 Where we do give written approval, this does not imply that compensation will be paid for the value of the improvements at the end of the tenancy. We will either accept the improvement and calculate compensation, or require reinstatement, as set out in this policy.

9.5 Where compensation is payable, payment will not be to the full amount paid by the tenant as depreciation will be deducted. Compensation will only be paid at the end of the tenancy and the amount payable will be set against any other sums that may be owed to us by the tenant.

9.6 Where a tenant is transferring to another A2Dominion home, reinstatement will be a condition of the transfer taking place. If a tenant vacates without undertaking necessary reinstatement, we may recharge the tenant for the cost in doing so and will take all necessary legal action to enforce payment if necessary.

9.7 If a customer makes an alteration that includes the installation of new items requiring regular maintenance, they will not receive compensation payment at the end of their tenancy, as A2Dominion will need to cover the costs of any future maintenance.

## 10. Monitoring and review

10.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, unless legislation, technology or sector developments require otherwise. This will ensure that it continues to meet its objectives and takes account of good practice developments.

## 11. Consultation

- 11.1 This policy has been prepared in consultation with teams across operational, governance and strategy functions.

## 12. Equality, diversity & inclusion statement

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 We will ensure 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.
- 12.3 We have carried out an equality impact assessment (EIA) on this policy with no changes/action needed.

## 13. Data Protection Statement

- 13.1 The protection of personal data is of great importance to A2Dominion Group and more than just a legal obligation.
- 13.2 A2Dominion Group and its affiliated organisations are registered as data controllers with the ICO. The registration numbers are as follows:
- 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
- 13.3 Our data protection policy and procedures are governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. We collect and process personal information 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.
- 13.4 For information on how we collect, store, process and use customers' personal data, please visit our website on [a2dominiongroup.co.uk/privacy-and-cookie-policy](https://a2dominiongroup.co.uk/privacy-and-cookie-policy).
- 13.5 For employee related privacy statement, please contact our HR team at [hrenquiries@a2dominion.co.uk](mailto:hrenquiries@a2dominion.co.uk).

13.6 You can also contact the Data Protection Officer / Data Compliance team at [governance@a2dominion.co.uk](mailto:governance@a2dominion.co.uk).

## **14. Associated documents**

- Aids and Adaptations policy
- Compensation policy
- Mutual Exchange policy
- Tenants' Improvement Works application form