

# Prioritisation Policy

---

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 A2Dominion is committed to providing fair and equal access to its homes and services. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plan helps us track how well we do this, checking for any significant differences between customer segments, according to their protected characteristics.
- 1.2 Alongside and as part of this, there are situations where we need to prioritise action for certain customers, and this policy sets out the way we consider prioritising customers according to their needs.
- 1.3 The policy applies group-wide and to customers who have the capacity to make their own decisions. Those who do not are assessed and supported under policies and practices relating to the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- 1.4 Some services are not our responsibility as they are covered by other organisations. We do our best to help customers find information and help by signposting to local services.

## 2. Policy aims and objectives

- 2.1 In adopting this policy, A2Dominion Housing Group aims to:
  - Identify specific support needs of customers, both long-term and temporary.
  - Support customers to live independently.
  - Be proactive so that customers are not at risk of harm when there is an interruption to any of our services.
  - Ensure customers are not disadvantaged because of a disability, vulnerability or circumstance.

## 3. What is our test for giving priority?

- 3.1 Those who experience difficulties with everyday living to the extent they need additional support with any of the following:
  - Accessing our services;



### **Our accessibility and translations service**

Do you need this policy in a different format or language? Please scan the QR code for more information.

- Coping in the event of a breakdown in our services; and/or
  - Sustaining the occupancy of their home.
- 3.2 When we are aware of these difficulties and action is needed, we will aim to prioritise these groups, taking into account:
- The action or service that is needed for the customer
  - If when we carry out the action or the service will affect the customer's situation and their vulnerability or risk
  - Our resources, allowing us to take action as quickly as possible.
- 3.3 We consider these factors to help us prioritise and adapt our services according to need. For example, we will be concerned if any customer has a problem with their heating, but this may be a particular concern in the winter, and for older customers. This means we don't have a one-size-fits-all approach where all prioritised customers are automatically moved to the top of a list for action. Instead, we carefully evaluate each case based on its unique circumstances and the specific needs of the customer.

## 4. The priority actions that we may take

- 4.1 The following is a list of typical actions where we may provide faster or extra services and support, depending on the circumstances, the need and the situation.
- Priority repairs - see [Appendix 1](#)
  - Carrying out repairs which are normally the responsibility of the tenant and/or waiving recharges in some circumstances.  
Additional support and/or efforts to arrange suitable temporary accommodation when a repair cannot be completed within a reasonable timescale, where this might put the customer at risk. Alternative accommodation cannot be guaranteed, particularly where a customer/household has more complex needs.
  - More regular contact. This may include additional home visits or visits by more than one officer at a time.
  - Longer appointment times.  
Waiting longer for people to answer the door.
  - Tenancy Sustainment services for those who are struggling financially.
  - Assistance with relevant form filling.
  - Liaison with family, friends and support providers where we have specific consent to do so.
  - Provision of information in alternative formats.
  - Use of interpretation services, including British Sign Language.
  - Provision of aids and adaptations.
  - Bursaries for young people 14-24.

- 4.2 The list does not cover every possible situation, and we (alongside our contractors) will use this policy as a guide to determine when special priority may be needed. When staff or operatives do exercise discretion, they should report back to the manager of the relevant service.

## 5. Identifying customers' support needs

- 5.1 Customers can tell us about their support needs at any time, and how they wish to communicate with us, for example, through My Account, by email, by phone or in person.
- 5.2 We will also provide customers with the opportunity to tell us their support needs using explicit consent to gain personal information. Our storage, use and sharing of personal information is compliant with data protection requirements.
- 5.3 Maintaining accurate records of customer support needs is very important, and we do this to ensure we deliver services to meet our customers' needs. Keeping this information means that our customers do not need to repeat personal information at each contact point, which can be frustrating or distressing.
- 5.4 Having accurate information about customers' needs is important as it helps us to respond to individual needs and to design, tailor and improve homes and services.
- 5.5 We also take extra steps to identify customers with vulnerabilities and are looking at ways to improve our information about customer needs, without being overly intrusive in our customer engagement. Examples of this include QR codes in buildings or asking additional questions when customers get in touch with us.
- 5.6 [Appendix 2](#) summarises additional steps we take to check needs at key stages in the customer journey, and to do so sensitively.
- 5.7 Staff and operatives should keep records updated as a household's support needs change.

## 6. Training

- 6.1 We will train and support staff and Pyramid Plus partners to identify, record and respond appropriately to customers' circumstances.

## 7. Consultation

- 7.1 This policy replaces A2Dominion's Vulnerable Persons Policy to reflect research into best practice terminology, staff consultation during Inclusion week, and customer engagement through a Tackling Stigma initiative, all undertaken in 2021.
- 7.2 We have consulted with customers through our Resident Scrutiny Panel and have made the necessary updates to make the policy clearer to understand.

## 8. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

- 8.1 A2Dominion Group, staff, 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.
- 8.2 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.

## 9. Data Protection Statement

- 9.1 The protection of personal data is of great importance to A2Dominion Group and more than just a legal obligation.
- 9.2 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
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 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>.
- 9.5 You can also contact the Data Protection Officer / Data Compliance team at [governance@a2dominion.co.uk](mailto:governance@a2dominion.co.uk).

## 10. Associated documents

- Prioritisation policy
- Decants policy
- Responsive repairs policy

## Appendix 1 – A2D Priority Repairs

This table provides some aspects of repairs where we may work to provide a faster response depending on the situation and customer needs. This table is for repairs where we have the responsibility to do the repair.

Depending on the situation, our contractor agreements we can request to categorise these as urgent/emergency, for example requesting a four hour make safe and 24-hour completion for highest risk customers. **This cannot be guaranteed as may rely on goodwill of contractors.**

The timescales for these will be managed with customers, depending on their needs and the work involved. We will seek to identify vulnerability at the first point of contact through proactive engagement with customers encouraging their disclosure of matters which need to be considered in the prioritisation of their repair.

Repair type (and where A2D has the repairing responsibility)	Urgent Repairs (typically 24 hours)	Households who may have a higher risk
<b>Loss of heating &amp; hot water in warm weather months (2<sup>nd</sup> May to 30 October)</b>	*	<b>Yes for:</b> Wheelchair users Children under three
<b>Loss of heating &amp; hot water in cold weather months (31<sup>st</sup> October to 1 May).</b> Temporary heaters provided if > 24 hours.	✓	<b>Plus, for electrical supply:</b> customers using: dialysis, oxygen cylinders or other medical equipment with limited back up power supply; or medication requiring refrigeration.  <b>Discretion in exceptional cases:</b> Agents will check for any special circumstances. If a customer is at risk and a more rapid response is needed then the agent may use discretion. This is for <b>exceptional</b> cases of serious disability or illness including undergoing medical treatment and recently discharged from hospital; Complex pregnancy; and those with a learning disability, dementia, or mental health issues who are living alone.
<b>Loss of cold water supply.</b> Note we may be reliant on the Utility Company to resolve,	✓	
<b>Dangerous electrical faults</b>	✓	
<b>Serious uncontrollable leaks from plumbing</b> i.e. that cannot be controlled by turning off the stopcock.	✓	
<b>Dangerous structures that need making safe</b>	✓	
<b>Lift breakdowns</b>	✓	
<b>Blocked flues</b>	✓	

Repair type (and where A2D has the repairing responsibility)	Urgent Repairs (typically 24 hours)	Households who may have a higher risk
<b>Loss of security</b> e.g. locks, doors and door entry systems, windows, cctv, lighting, fencing	✓	<b>Yes, for:</b> Victims of abuse & harassment Our specialist schemes
<b>Warden Call Alarms</b>	✓	<b>Yes for:</b> Extra Care and Retirement schemes

**Where we do not have a repairing responsibility** we may raise a repair normally classed as the Tenant's or Leaseholder's responsibility if we are concerned the customer is at risk (e.g. to change a light bulb). This may include households with a registered member who is:

- Disabled
- A child under three
- Pregnant – complex pregnancy, more likely if sole adult/unsupported
- Frail elderly – particularly if living alone/unsupported
- Seriously ill, undergoing treatment
- Are in periods following discharge from hospital or other institutional care
- Have a learning disability, dementia, mental health issues
- Experience periods of sustained illness at home

We reserve the right to recharge the cost of these repairs.

**Guide for exercising discretion** – if you are concerned that someone is at risk of injury or harm then you can prioritise them, regardless of tenure. Questions to consider:

- Does the nature of the repair put them at risk e.g. lack of warmth or security, trip hazard or hygiene risk?
- Do they have a physical or mental disability which may make them more vulnerable?
- Do their circumstances put them at a higher risk e.g. living alone/unsupported, parent of baby/young children, carer.
- Are they struggling to cope due to bereavement, relationship breakdown or recent traumatic event?

If you are uncomfortable exercising discretion then escalate to your line manager.

## Appendix 2 - Pro-active arrangements to identify customers' support needs

Identifying a households' needs at an early stage enables us to recognise where we should provide or facilitate extra services or support. As well as asking customers to let us know their support needs, we will use our contact with customers to ensure the services we provide are timely and appropriate.

**Development of new homes** - Where we build new homes to mobility standards (which are generally set by the relevant Planning Authority), and we know who the end user will be, we will work with them and the designated Occupational Therapist to adapt it to their needs. This may include adapting access to the building, as well as adaptations within the home.

**Nomination stage** - Nominees for housing are assessed in terms of their capability to hold and sustain a tenancy and to determine any support that will be required.

**Viewing** - A risk assessment checklist is completed prior to viewing to ensure any necessary arrangements are in place to enable the viewing e.g. that a support worker is invited to attend, or that translation/signing services are available. Viewings are accompanied as a further means of identifying vulnerability, support needs and suitability of the property offered.

**Customer Profiling Questionnaire** - Completed at sign-up this includes information on disability and other health issues, communication needs and other support documents.

**Welcome Visit** - carried out 2-8 weeks after sign-up, depending on the circumstances of the household. This provides a further opportunity to assess needs.

**Starter Tenancy Visits** - these take place on a risk-assessed basis, targeting those most in need of additional housing management input.

**Risk Assessment Forms** - these are completed as part of our policies and procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, and harassment and hate crime and will seek to identify where either the victim or the perpetrator is vulnerable.

**Investigations for Tenancy Breaches** - vulnerability will be considered as part of the assessment and triage process.

**Health and Safety Assessments** - Risk assessments and Health and Safety ratings of hazards or potential hazards will take vulnerability into account, as part of repairs and maintenance procedures for working at a customer's home.

**Repair and other service requests** - health and safety implications will be considered when determining urgency of repair appointments. Where there is an interruption to

service A2Dominion may undertake appropriate interventions in liaison with the customer and using a risk-based approach.

**Links to Safeguarding** - Safeguarding implications will be considered from any identified concerns from all of the above, to enable any relevant support interventions for our vulnerable customers, ensuring effective protection and prevention of harm. We will also link any relevant safeguarding risk assessments with our internal and external colleagues for a holistic approach.