



Response to the Regulator of Social Housing

In November 2022, the Regulator of Social Housing wrote to larger social housing providers, including A2Dominion, asking us to provide information on damp and mould in our homes.

This document provides a summary of our response to the Regulator, capturing our approach to dealing with damp and mould, supporting customers, and improving the way we work.

1) How do we assess damp and mould in our homes?

Our approach to assessing damp and mould is based on:

- **Identifying** damp and mould issues:
 - Whenever a customer tells us there is a problem
 - Whenever we carry out routine surveys of our homes
 - Whenever we review the information we hold about the profile and condition of our homes.
- **Prioritising** customers living with damp and mould issues by:
 - Checking whether a customer has a specific support need that makes them more vulnerable. For example, their age or health.
- **Assessing** reports of damp and mould issues by:
 - Undertaking onsite inspection surveys to assess the extent of damp and mould
 - Offering the use of damp and mould trackers to help monitor and assess problems
 - Prioritising homes with damp and mould issues into categories following a full technical assessment.
- **Monitoring** damp and mould issues by:
 - Closely following an enhanced case management process across our various teams
 - Using data and analysis to help provide a better overview and understanding of all our damp and mould cases.

2) What is the extent of damp and mould issues in our homes?

Over the past two years through to December 2022, we have handled over 4,700 cases of damp and mould across the 38,000+ residential properties we own and/or manage. This includes 747 current cases of damp and mould of which 17% have been identified as priority one (including potential Housing Health & Safety Rating System category one cases).

3) What actions are we taking against damp and mould?

Customer safety is our top priority, and we have developed robust plans to ensure we act quickly to diagnose and remedy cases of damp and mould. This includes:

- **Setting-up an action plan and project team**

We have established an action plan and specialist team to improve and accelerate reporting, assessment and treatment of damp and mould issues. This will strengthen our approach and provide more resource to address concerns.

- **Accelerating our repairs programme**

We've started an accelerated programme of inspections and repairs in our homes, drawing on an additional sixty colleagues who have been borrowed from other areas of the business. Our initial focus has been on contacting customers who have previously reported damp and mould, particularly people in the most vulnerable situations, to check for any outstanding issues. Where this is the case, we've been arranging inspections, creating individual resolution plans, and undertaking remedial work.

- **Improving our processes and data**

We've been reviewing the way we deal with reports of damp and mould to understand where we can make improvements. This includes refreshing our policy and reporting on damp and mould and making changes to some of our processes and call scripts, such as getting more information from customers the first time they contact us. This allows us to better assess the issue and respond more quickly and effectively with inspections, cleaning and repairs.

Strengthening the data we hold on our homes is another priority to help us better understand cases of damp and mould and inform our repairs programme. Over the medium term, we intend to use our data to undertake trend analysis of typical cases and problems, which can be used to inform our strategies and investment decisions. For example, ensuring our maintenance programmes includes preventative regimes and addresses more complex root causes such as structural repairs and replacements, supported by an enhanced budget. And in the longer-term, we plan to scale up our stock condition survey programme to get more comprehensive oversight of our homes.

- **Working with customers**

We've launched a communications campaign to encourage residents to let us know of any damp and mould in their homes as soon as possible, with reminders of the various ways to contact us. Across our communications, we've

been acknowledging that it's our duty to fully investigate, identify the cause and treat any cases of damp and mould in the homes we manage and maintain. We've been providing useful tips and guidance for preventing condensation, damp and mould on a regular basis, whilst ensuring the language we use focuses on resolving issues and improving property performance rather than suggesting blame on the part of our customers.

We've also understood that the cost-of-living crisis is impacting people's ability to heat and ventilate their homes so have raised awareness on the support available to residents via our Tenancy Sustainment Team. In future, we plan to establish a customer focus group to review our approach to damp and mould and monitor our action plan. This focus group will be made up of customers who have experienced these issues and can provide real perspectives. This is all underpinned by our existing complaints process, which gives customers the ability to complain to us and the Ombudsman if they feel their damp and mould concerns have not been adequately addressed.

- **Working with colleagues and partners**

We've been encouraging a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould amongst colleagues and our external partners, so that recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman's Spotlight report are embedded in all our working practices. We've raised awareness through our internal communications channels and have reviewed and improved our guidance, training, reporting, and coordination across teams. Later this year we will commission an internal audit team to review our approach, and at a later stage an external peer review. We will also carry out a review with our Group Board, to assess our progress.

4) How do we ensure that individual damp and mould cases raised by residents are dealt with promptly and effectively?

Customer Contact Centre

We're asking customers to report damp and mould issues including by calling our Customer Contact Centre or emailing us at dampandmould@a2dominion.co.uk. The Customer Contact Centre will, in the first instance, manage any non-related issues, then focus on the damp and mould enquiry. This will include trying to identify any particular needs that the customer may have (e.g. young people and those with health issues) and the cause (if there's a leak, for example) over the phone and arranging a repair or a mould wash. The Contact Centre will triage and assist with any other enquiries first before passing the call to the new Damp & Mould Customer Liaison Team.

Customer Liaison Team

We recently launched a new Damp & Mould Customer Liaison Team to give customers a dedicated point of contact after reporting damp and mould to us.

The team's key responsibilities include:

- Managing the new email inbox (dampandmould@a2dominion.co.uk)

- Managing all existing damp and mould case calls from customers
- Calling customers with damp and mould issues who are on our highest priority list, such as households with children and where residents have health issues
- Contacting customers who have historic cases of damp and mould
- Talking through issues with customers and deciding on a course of action. Most of the time this will be a surveyor visit.
- Liaising with surveyors and tracking cases to ensure they are completed
- Ensuring customers are kept updated with progress
- Contacting customers to ensure the problem has been fully resolved to their satisfaction.

Further Information

How can customers get help?

- Call our [Customer Contact Centre](tel:08004320077) on 0800 432 0077
- Email us at dampandmould@a2dominion.co.uk
- Can get in touch with our Tenancy Sustainment Team if they're worried about money, as there are many ways we can provide support

How can customers get news and information?

- Visit our website at www.a2dominion.co.uk for useful tips and guidance, including:
 - [I have a damp problem - what should I do?](#)
 - [How do I get rid of mould in my home?](#)
 - [How can I prevent mould and condensation?](#)
 - Or search for 'damp' and 'mould' for news and updates
- Follow us – on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

How can partners and investors get news and information?

- Visit our website – www.a2dominiongroup.co.uk
- Email us – investors@a2dominion.co.uk
- Call us - 020 8825 1000
- Follow us – on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)
- Sign up to receive our business newsletter on our website.