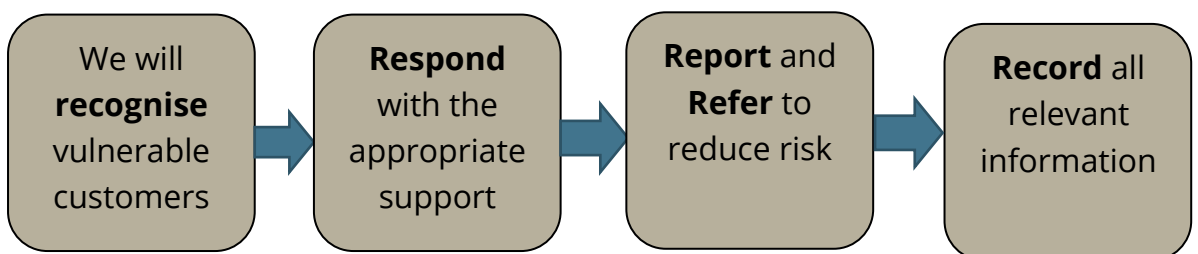


Prioritisation Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy ensures that our customers receive services that meet their needs by identifying any vulnerabilities or specific needs a customer has and tailoring our service to meet their needs promptly and effectively.
- 1.2 This policy reflects our commitment to the Equalities Act 2010 principles by ensuring that our customers receive services that meet their needs, without prejudice or bias.
- 1.3 We are committed to providing fair and equal access to 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.
- 1.4 We are committed to the 5Rs detailed in the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight report (Attitude, Respect and Rights):



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- 1.5 Recording all relevant information will help us to continuously improve all our services for our customers.
- 1.6 The policy applies group-wide and to customers who have the capacity to make their own decisions. Those who do not have capacity are assessed and supported under policies and practices relating to the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- 1.7 Where we are unable to provide a service for a customer, we do our best to help customers find information and signpost to appropriate organisations and services.

2. Policy aims and objectives

- 2.1 In adopting this policy, we aim to:
 - Identify any support needs that our customers may have, both long-term and temporary.
 - Support customers to live independently
 - Safeguard customers so that they 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
 - Prioritise based on the severity and urgency of the customer's needs, and apply the prioritisation criteria in a transparent, fair and consistent way.

3. How and who we will prioritise

- 3.1 We will look at those who experience difficulties with everyday living to the extent that they need additional support with any of the following:
 - Accessing our services
 - Coping in the event of a breakdown in our services; and/or
 - Sustaining the occupancy of their home.
- 3.2 When we're aware of these challenges and action is needed, we'll aim to prioritise these groups, by considering:
 - The type of help the customer needs
 - How our action might improve the customers situation and reduce any risks
 - Our available resources, to ensure we can respond as quickly as possible.

- 3.3 We will take individual circumstances into account and adjust our services based on specific needs. For example, if a customer's heating breaks down during winter, and they are elderly or have young children, we'll prioritise restoring their heating over less urgent repairs. Our approach is to carefully assess each case to ensure we're addressing 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 customer 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. Having clear and accessible communication channels such as provision of information in alternative formats and/or use of interpretation services, including British Sign Language.
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- 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.
- 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 aids and adaptations.
- Management transfer considerations.

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.

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 via:

- [My Account](https://a2dominion.co.uk/myaccount) (a2dominion.co.uk/myaccount)
- Our live chat service (a2dominion.co.uk)
- Calling us on 0800 432 0077
- Speaking to a member of our staff at one of our office locations (Ealing, Staines, Winchester and Oxford)
- Writing to us at: A2Dominion, 113 Uxbridge Road, Ealing, W5 5TL

5.2 We will also provide customers with the opportunity to tell us their support needs using consent to gain personal information. Our storage, use and sharing of personal information is compliant with data protection requirements.

5.3 We will use our Customer Relationship Management tools (D365) to maintain accurate records of customer support needs, and to identify and prioritise customers who are most at risk to ensure we deliver services to meet our customers' needs.

5.4 We will keep information updated as household support needs change. Ensuring information remains up to date means that our customers do not need to repeat personal information at each contact point, which can be frustrating or distressing.

5.5 As well as helping us to respond to individual needs, we will use information about the needs of our customers to help us design, tailor and improve homes and services.

5.6 We aim to use the least intrusive way possible to gather customer information, for example using QR codes in buildings to allow customers to give their information in a way that suits them.

5.7 [Appendix 2](#) summarises additional steps we take to check needs at key stages in the customer journey, and to do so sensitively.

6. Training

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

7. Monitoring and reviewing

7.1 We will carry out audits and reviews to ensure this policy is implemented. We will do this by:

- Reviewing this policy and associated procedures every three years
- Checking the policy still aligns with the Equality Act 2010 and other legislation
- Reviewing customer records to identify how our customers are being prioritised, to ensure that we are continuing to respond as effectively as possible.

8. Consultation

8.1 We have consulted with customers through our Resident Scrutiny Panel and have made the necessary updates to make the policy clearer to understand.

9. Definitions

9.1 **Protected Characteristics:** Specific aspects of a person's identity that are safeguarded from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010, such as age, disability, race, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, religion/belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

9.2 **Mental Capacity Act 2005:** A UK law designed to protect and empower people who may lack the mental capacity to make their own decisions about their care and treatment.

9.3 **Prioritisation criteria:** The factors used to determine the urgency and order in which services are provided to customers based on their needs.

9.4 **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools (D365):** Software used to manage and analyze customer interactions and data, in this case, to maintain accurate records of customer support needs.

10. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

10.1 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.

10.2 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.

11. Data Protection Statement

- 11.1 The protection of personal data is of great importance to A2D and more than just a legal obligation.
- 11.2 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
- 11.3 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.
- 11.4 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.
- 11.5 You can also contact the Data Protection Officer / Data Compliance team at governance@a2dominion.co.uk.

12. Associated documents

- Accessible Communications policy
- Damp and Mould policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Decant policy
- Repairs policy
- Housing Ombudsman's guidance on attitudes, respect and rights
- Housing Ombudsman's guidance knowledge and information management

Appendix 1 – A2Dominion 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)	Response Time	Households who may have a higher risk
Loss of heating & hot water in warm weather months (2nd May to 30 October)	24 hours	<p>Yes for: Wheelchair users Children under three</p> <p>Plus, for electrical supply: customers using: dialysis, oxygen cylinders or other medical equipment with limited back up power supply; or medication requiring refrigeration.</p> <p>Discretion in exceptional cases: <i>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 exceptional 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.</i></p>
Loss of heating & hot water in cold weather months (31st October to 1 May). Temporary heaters provided if > 24 hours.	4 hours	
Loss of cold water supply. Note we may be reliant on the Utility Company to resolve,	24 hours	
Dangerous electrical faults	4 hours	
Serious uncontrollable leaks from plumbing i.e. that cannot be controlled by turning off the stopcock.	4 hours	
Dangerous structures that need making safe	hours	
Lift breakdowns	4 hours	
Blocked flues	24 hours	

Repair type (and where A2D has the repairing responsibility)	Response Time	Households who may have a higher risk
Loss of security <i>e.g. locks, doors and door entry systems, windows, cctv, lighting, fencing</i>	4 hours	Yes, for: Victims of abuse & harassment Our specialist schemes
Warden Call Alarms	24 hours	Yes for: 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 lock). 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, known substance use needs (drug/alcohol) or domestic abuse
- Experience periods of sustained illness at home
- Support accessing our services
- Sustaining the occupancy

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

Guide for using discretion – if you are concerned that someone is at risk of injury or harm then you can prioritise them, regardless of tenure type. Consider:

- Does 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 making them more vulnerable?
- Do their circumstances increase their risk e.g. living alone/unsupported, having a baby/young children, or being a carer.
- Are they struggling to cope due to bereavement, relationship breakdown or a recent traumatic event?

If you are about prioritising a repair 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.

Personalised Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) - Provides a tailored approach to evacuation for those residents who would have difficulty self-evacuating in the event of a fire.