

# Safeguarding Children Policy

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Safeguarding Children can be defined as protecting the health, wellbeing and human rights of children and young people who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or harm.
- 1.2 A child is defined as a person who is under the age of 18. Please see section 2.6 for an exception.
- 1.3 This policy meets all relevant legislation.

## 2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 The aim of this Policy is to give guidance to staff and to pinpoint the roles and responsibilities of management and staff in relation to the protection and safeguarding of children. The Policy also sets out a code of good practice for staff to follow.
- 2.2 As a non-statutory agency, A2Dominion will work in partnership with relevant statutory partners to respond to suspicions, concerns or incidents of abuse in accordance with statutory procedures.
- 2.3 This Policy, and its procedure, covers the responsibilities of the A2Dominion Board/Committee Members, staff and volunteers in relation to the protection and safeguarding of children. On a day-to-day basis the people working with children may be either paid staff or authorised volunteers. Throughout the Policy the term "staff" is used to refer to all employees, volunteers and contractors unless otherwise specified.
- 2.4 It is the responsibility and obligation of all A2Dominion Board/Committee Members, staff and volunteers, under this Policy, to take action if they have any concerns, suspect or are disclosed information about the suffering or abuse of a child or children.
- 2.5 Staff will report concerns they have about a child immediately, or as soon as reasonably possible, within 24 hours (including weekends) to their Line Manager and by the next working day to the Safeguarding team via the online incident

form. After discussion an action will be agreed to refer to Children's Social Care where there are concerns of immediate or significant harm. This may necessitate informing police.

- 2.6 When someone is 18 or over but is still receiving children's services and a safeguarding issue is raised, the matter should be dealt with through Children's Services, via a specialist Leaving Care Team. For example, this could occur when a young person with substantial and complex needs continues to be supported in a residential educational setting until the age of 25. Over this age it will refer to Safeguarding Adults, see legislation below (Appendix A).
- 2.7 Where the concern is safeguarding, rather than immediate protection, a referral will be made to instigate a CAF or EHA (Common Assessment Framework or Early Help assessment to identify a specific Team Around the Child, or Team Around the Family) as soon as reasonably possible, within 24 hours.
- 2.8 A2Dominion recognises the needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.
- 2.9 **Safeguarding definition:**
  - Protecting the health, wellbeing and human rights of Child/ren **'At Risk'** from abuse and harm
  - Protecting vulnerable child/ren from abuse, harm and neglect, and creating a **'Risk'** free environment
  - Protecting the health, wellbeing of children and young people **'At Risk'** of abuse and harm
  - Safeguarding is about people and organisations working together to prevent and reduce **'Risk'** and experience of abuse or neglect.

### 3. Implementation

- 3.1 In relation to safeguarding and child protection A2Dominion acknowledges that children may have had difficult experiences prior to living in A2Dominion properties and these experiences may have increased their vulnerability. The implementation & approach of this policy is based on ensuring wherever possible the safeguarding of children reflects the principles of both UK legislation and guidance and international agreements, including but not exhaustive: The health and welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.
- 3.2 All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual identity, gender reassignment or pregnancy and maternity have a right to protection from harm or abuse.
- 3.3 All concerns and disclosures of abuse will be taken seriously by Board/Committee members, staff and volunteers and responded to

appropriately – this may require a referral to children’s services and in emergencies, the police. If this happens parents will be informed unless it is in the interest of the child not to do so.

- 3.4 All safeguarding concerns in relation to any or more of the definitions mentioned in Appendix B, will be reported to the Line Manager and or the Safeguarding Team within 24 hours using our Safeguarding Children procedure.
- 3.5 Where there is alleged misconduct on the part of an A2Dominion employee, this will be investigated and, where appropriate, action taken in accordance with the Group’s Disciplinary Policy & Procedure. The responsible line manager will work with the local authority designated LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) as set out in the “working together to safeguard children” 2018 section 11 of the Children’s Act 2004.
- 3.6 Where there are allegations made against a Person in a Position of Trust (PiPoT) these will be investigated and the responsible line manager will work within local authorities Guidelines.
- 3.7 Information will only be shared with relevant agencies and will be proportionate to the concern.
- 3.8 A2Dominion is committed to safe recruitment, selection and vetting of staff, including by DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checking prior to appointment and every three years thereafter.
- 3.9 Contractors, working on behalf of A2Dominion, are also DBS checked and are subject to A2Dominion’s Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures.
- 3.10 We will provide housing which is safe for clients; this will include CCTV where appropriate, lockable and monitored communal areas, and private and confidential areas for residents to speak to staff when they need to for instance; conducting telephone calls with residents in private spaces. Staff will be trained in the appropriate use of CCTV, and other electronic devices with recording capabilities to ensure they are safeguarding clients; for example, staff will gain explicit consent before photographing a resident. Staff will adhere to the Group’s “Photography, Film and Audio Consent Policy”.
- 3.11 We will provide appropriate safeguarding training for all staff. All new starters complete Safeguarding Adults Level 1 and Safeguarding Children Level 2 during their first 3 months, and all front-line staff and safeguarding champions complete Safeguarding Adults and Children Level 2. Further safeguarding training is available to anyone who needs it as part of their role; some roles, including our safeguarding team and managers of frontline teams, must complete Safeguarding Adults and Children Level 3.
- 3.12 We will offer other associated safeguarding training to enhance competencies, based on staff’s roles and responsibilities, such as:

- Hoarding
  - Modern Day Slavery
  - Risk Assessments
  - Suicide Awareness
  - First Aid
  - Professional Boundaries
  - Domestic Abuse
  - Mental Health Awareness.
- 3.13 Children and parents have a right to information which could make life better and/or safer for them and A2Dominion provides its residents with information about how and with whom they can share their concerns, complaints and anxieties.
- 3.14 In specialist housing services in which clients share communal spaces, such as lounges/kitchens/bathrooms, consideration will be given to safeguarding and minimising risk when matching housemates. Staff will carry out risk assessments and comprehensive discussion will take place with current and potential clients to identify their needs and ensure that they are suitable house mates to each other.
- 3.15 A2Dominion will work closely with Local Authorities in order to safeguard children.
- 3.16 All information held by A2Dominion in relation to children will be stored securely.
- 3.17 No children will be photographed by any A2Dominion staff without written permission from the parent/care-giver or in accordance with our Photography policy and procedure.
- 3.18 Applicants for housing will be asked for background information to enable us to identify those children who may be at risk of abuse or neglect or identify potential residents who may pose a risk to children.
- 3.19 A2Dominion will liaise and work with other agencies including the local authority, probation service and MAPPA if an applicant for housing discloses a criminal conviction or other history and A2Dominion are concerned with regard to the suitability of the accommodation for the applicant in light of that conviction/history. MAPPA have responsibility for public protection against serious offenders and would ordinarily notify housing providers and schools etc. if a violent or sexual offender who may pose a risk was moving to a particular area.
- 3.20 A2Dominion will work collaboratively with Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) where there are identified high risk domestic abuse cases involving children, to jointly support victims of abuse and their children.
- 3.21 A2Dominion ensure that HR procedures, such as DBS, Good Repute and Code of Conduct, are linked and aligned with safeguarding procedures and policies. In the case of a member of staff being subject to disciplinary action following

inappropriate behaviour which has caused customers harm, or put customers at risk of future harm, managers should ensure that the Safeguarding team are informed.

- 3.22 Hiring managers must ensure the relevant level of DBS checks are sourced, based on HR's recruitment policy, which is aligned with staff roles and relates to customers' vulnerabilities.

## 4. Safeguarding Boards / Partners

- 4.1 A Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a multi-agency body set up in every local authority. Each LSCB has an independent Chair, that is, someone who doesn't work for social services. The Chair will work closely with the Director of Children's Services.

The role of the LSCB is to:

- Coordinate what is done by everyone on the LSCB to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area
- Make sure that each organization acts effectively when they are doing this.

The LSCB publishes policies and procedures for child protection in their area.

- 4.2 A Safeguarding Partner: in relation to a local authority area in England is defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) as:

- the local authority
- a clinical commissioning group for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area
- the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area

## 5. Performance Measures and Targets

- 5.1 There are no performance measures or targets applicable to this policy, however all Child Protection referrals and incidents will be reported to A2Dominion's Audit and Risk Committee.

## 6. Responsibility and Reporting Arrangements

- 6.1 The Senior Management team and Safeguarding Manager at A2Dominion are responsible for ensuring that all staff understand the importance of this policy and the related procedures and comply with them. All staff working directly with children receives relevant Safeguarding Children training. All staff at A2Dominion will be briefed on reporting procedures.

- 6.2 It is essential to the implementation of the policy that staff know how to deal with emergencies and to express concerns to the appropriate person in the organisations.

## **7. Monitoring and Review Arrangements**

- 7.1 We will monitor the effectiveness and implementation of this Policy to ensure that customers are treated fairly and equitably.
- 7.2 This Policy will be reviewed every three years, unless legislation or sector developments require otherwise, ensuring that it continues to meet its objectives and take account of good practice developments.
- 7.3 We will consult with our customers on any review of this Policy and demonstrate how their views have influenced the process.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 Specialist Housing, Business Improvement Team, Safeguarding team, Local Authority Commissioners.
- 8.2 This policy will be reviewed by customers through our Resident Scrutiny Panel.

## **9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement**

- 9.1 Review and amend (as needed) the statement below
- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 We have undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment for this policy with no areas of concern identified.

## **10. Data Protection Statement**

- 10.1 The protection of personal data is of great importance to A2Dominion Group and more than just a legal obligation.
- 10.2 A2Dominion Group and affiliate organisations are the data controllers registered with the 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
- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 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>.
- 10.5 For employee related privacy statement, please contact our HR team at [hrenquiries@a2dominion.co.uk](mailto:hrenquiries@a2dominion.co.uk).
- 10.6 You can also contact the Data Protection Officer / Data Compliance team at [governance@a2dominion.co.uk](mailto:governance@a2dominion.co.uk)

## 11. Associated documents

- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Social Media Policy for Children in Refuge
- Data Protection Policy
- A2Dominion Privacy Policy - [www.a2dominion.co.uk/privacy](http://www.a2dominion.co.uk/privacy)