

Pest Control Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is to ensure a safe, healthy, and pest-free environment within A2Dominion homes and communities.
- 1.2 This policy will outline the measures to be followed for preventing, identifying and managing pest infestations, with a focus on timely and effective responses to reports by customers, colleagues and third parties.
- 1.3 This policy meets the Regulator of Social Housing Safety & Quality Standard, the Pest Act 1954 (Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949) and supports the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018. We have also considered the Housing Ombudsman guidance on pest control.

2. Policy scope, aims and objectives

- 2.1. This policy outlines the principles of how we will ensure our homes and communities are kept free of pests in a sustainable, effective and environmentally responsible manner, in line with customer tenancy agreements, leases and licences.
- 2.2. The policy applies to:
 - Homes we own or manage in line with a customer's tenancy or lease agreement.
 - Land owned and/or managed by us, including that in communal areas and customers' private gardens.
- 2.3. Where a third party is partly or fully responsible for the management of pests in a block or estate, for example, where we are not the freeholder



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and the freeholder has appointed a managing agent, we will encourage customers to report any pest issues to the third party. We will take steps to ensure that the third party carries out its obligations under any contractual agreement. Where necessary, we will act in line with this policy, to safeguard our customers within that block or estate.

- 2.4. This policy aims to ensure that, in the event of an outbreak of pests, both customers and colleagues are clear in the actions we should take to either resolve the issue or support customers to access the right help and support to resolve it themselves.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 When we refer to “pest” or “pests” in this policy, we refer to:

- Rats
- Mice
- Bedbugs
- Cockroaches
- Silverfish
- Insects, including fleas and woodworm
- Squirrels

- 3.2 We recognise that there are other pests which may impact our customers. When deciding what action to take, we will consider the scale of the impact on and risk to our customers and property that we own or manage. We may choose to act in response to different pests at our own discretion. We will consider our Prioritisation Policy when considering whether to use this discretion or not.

- 3.3 When we refer to a “communal area”, we refer to areas such as:

- Communal corridors
- Communal stores – for example sheds, bin stores
- Communal rooms – for example lounges, offices, hairdressers, guest rooms, toilets and kitchens
- Shared pipework – for example soil pipes
- Shared walls (internal/external) (detached properties do not apply)
- Shared lofts
- Communal gardens and play spaces
- Car parks

- Any other area that we are responsible for where multiple customers have permission to access according to their tenancy or lease agreement
- 3.4 When we refer to “we” or “us” we are referring to A2Dominion colleagues or any contractor which we appoint to carry out pest control activities on our behalf.

4. Customer responsibilities

4.1 Customers are responsible for:

- Maintaining their homes in line with their tenancy or lease agreement, and to take all reasonable steps to prevent pest infestations, including maintaining cleanliness in living areas.
- Reporting any signs of pests promptly to us.
- Co-operating with pest control measures, including allowing access to our contractors to carry out inspections and treatments.

5. A2Dominion responsibilities

- 5.1 Our landlord maintenance responsibilities are set out in customer tenancy and lease agreements.
- 5.2 We will hold a contract with suitably qualified and accredited pest control contractors. The contractors shall carry out the services in accordance with legislation, industry standards and best practice, within reasonable timescales (which in some cases could take several months).
- 5.3 We will keep a record of all pests reported by customers, staff, contractors or other third parties, and keep those records updated on the actions we have taken to resolve the issue in line with this policy.
- 5.4 We will provide clear guidance to customers to reduce the likelihood of pest infestations and advice on maintaining their homes to prevent pest infestations.
- 5.5 We will provide clear guidance to colleagues on how to apply this policy, so that we can be clear with customers on what action we will take to support them.
- 5.6 We will carry out periodic inspections of estates and deal with any issues arising which could result in pest infestation if not addressed.

- 5.7 We will work with management companies and managing agents to ensure agreed standards are met and issues are responded. Where necessary, we will take action to safeguard customers impacted by the inaction of third parties.
- 5.8 We will consider any regulatory or legislative requirements relating to the protection of wildlife when deciding whether we will act or not.

6. How we will manage reports of pests

6.1 Pests in communal areas

- 6.1.1 We will respond to all reports of pests within the communal areas that we are responsible for.
- 6.1.2 We aim to proactively communicate with customers on treatments in the communal areas, but our priority will be to carry out treatments as soon as possible.
- 6.1.3 Where a third party is partly or fully responsible for the management of pests in the communal areas of a block or estate, we will encourage customers to report any pest issues to the third party. We will take steps to ensure that the third party carries out its obligations under any contractual agreement. Where necessary, we will act in line with this policy as if we were responsible for the communal areas, to safeguard our customers within that block or estate.

6.2 Pests in customer homes

- 6.2.1 When a customer reports an infestation in their own home, our response will be driven by an assessment of the type of pest, the type of property, any contractual obligations placed on us or any third party, and an assessment of the risks to customers considering any customer vulnerabilities. We will also consider whether the infestation in a customer's home started because of an issue in the communal area. When the customer reports the issue to us, we will be clear about how this policy applies to their situation, and what action, if any, we will take. On some occasions that action may be limited to signposting the customer to self-help guides.
- 6.2.2 We will consider customer circumstances in line with our Prioritisation Policy when deciding what action to take, if any.

- 6.2.3 We will consider our obligations under the Housing Act 2004 (Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)).
- 6.2.4 Following an inspection, there may be occasions where our pest control contractor recommends treatment throughout an entire block. In such instances, we will make all reasonable efforts to engage with all customers of that block to ensure that treatment can progress. Where a customer does not engage with these efforts, we may take legal action against them in line with their tenancy or lease agreement, to safeguard other customers from the ongoing infestation.
- 6.2.5 Following an inspection, we may decide that, in accordance with a customer's tenancy or lease agreement, the customer is responsible for on-going treatment. We will only decide this upon receipt of a report from our pest control contractor confirming that the infestation is not a result of a communal infestation, and is not caused by outstanding repairs, or faults in the fabric of the building.
- 6.2.6 In all cases, we will provide appropriate advice and assistance to customers on practical steps they can take to manage a pest infestation in their home. We may also signpost customers to their local authority for further advice and assistance.
- 6.2.7 Where a customer lives in a block where we are not the freeholder, and the customer reports pests within their own homes, we will act in line with this policy. Where our pest control contractor reports that issues with the fabric or maintenance of the building is likely to be caused by or contributing to the infestation, we will engage with the managing agent to ensure that they act in line with their contractual obligations. Where necessary, we will act, to safeguard our customers.

6.3 Pests originating from non-customers

- 6.3.1 Where the evidence suggests that a pest issue is originating from the home of a non-customer, we will notify the environmental health department of the relevant local authority and advise customers to do the same.
- 6.3.2 If the pest problem progresses to the point of impacting the communal areas under our responsibility and entering our customers' homes, we will act in line with this policy.

6.4 Recovery of costs

- 6.4.1 We will seek to recover the costs that we incur on pest control inspections and treatments through service charges, where tenancy and lease agreements allow.
- 6.4.2 In some circumstances, we may, in our sole discretion, decide to not pass on the costs of inspection and treatment, even when tenancy and lease agreements allow.
- 6.4.3 Where reports from our pest control contractor confirm that the customer's actions or inaction is a likely cause or contributory factor of the infestation, such as overgrown gardens, inappropriate storage of domestic waste, fly tipping, and unhygienic living conditions within the home, we may recharge customers the cost of inspections or treatments. We may also recharge any legal costs that we incur should we need to take legal action to control and prevent ongoing infestations. Such recovery will take place in line with our Recharge Policy.
- 6.4.4 Where we have had to act in line with this policy to safeguard our customers, where a third party has, in our view, not fulfilled its contractual obligations, we will seek to recover our costs through the third party.

6.5 Customers needing temporary accommodation pending proofing works or treatment programmes (decants)

- 6.5.1 Proofing is the process of preventing pest infestations by restricting potential entry points for pests within a property.
- 6.5.2 We will always prioritise the completion of proofing works and treatment programmes to ensure customers can remain in their home wherever possible.
- 6.5.2 We will consider our Prioritisation Policy and Decant Policy when deciding whether a customer will need to temporarily vacate their home.
- 6.5.3 Where we decide not to offer a customer temporary accommodation whilst proofing works or treatment are ongoing, we will keep this under review based on any new information relating to the scale of proofing works, or the ongoing level of infestation.

6.6 Planned and preventative treatments

- 6.6.1 In addition to our own data and insight, we will use information recorded on how this policy is applied, as well as information from our pest control contractor, to decide whether a preventative pest control programme is appropriate within a block or estate.

6.6.2 If this is the case, we will consult with customers in line with their tenancy or lease agreement, to commence this service. We will recharge customers the cost of this service through service charge in line with their tenancy or lease agreements. We will be clear about the ongoing costs of such preventative programmes.

7. Monitoring and reviewing

7.1 We will monitor the application of this policy by regularly reviewing data collected by us and our contractor. We will use this data to ensure that the policy is applied correctly, and to decide on whether any policy amendments are required.

7.2 We will hold data collected by our pest control contractor which in most cases will include:

- Visit dates
- Pests found
- Treatments/baits used and their location
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH) data
- Recommendations to maintain the site as a pest free environment

7.3 We will hold regular meetings to review the performance of the contract, including the cost of works. We may make any necessary adjustments to our policy or procedure as necessary.

7.4 As we have decided to take a new approach to pest control management, we will review this policy one year after initial implementation to ensure that we are achieving the desired outcomes for our customers. Subsequent reviews are expected to take place every three years, or sooner if there are any changes to legislation or good practice.

8. Consultation

8.1 A2Dominion's Customer Services Committee and Group Board have provided comments on this policy during its development.

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

9.1 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.

- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 We have carried out an equality impact assessment (EIA) on this policy with no changes/action needed.

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 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 a2dominiongroup.co.uk/privacy-and-cookie-policy.
- 10.5 For employee related privacy statement, please contact our People Services team at people.support@a2dominion.co.uk.
- 10.6 You can also contact the Data Protection Officer / Data Compliance team at governance@a2dominion.co.uk.