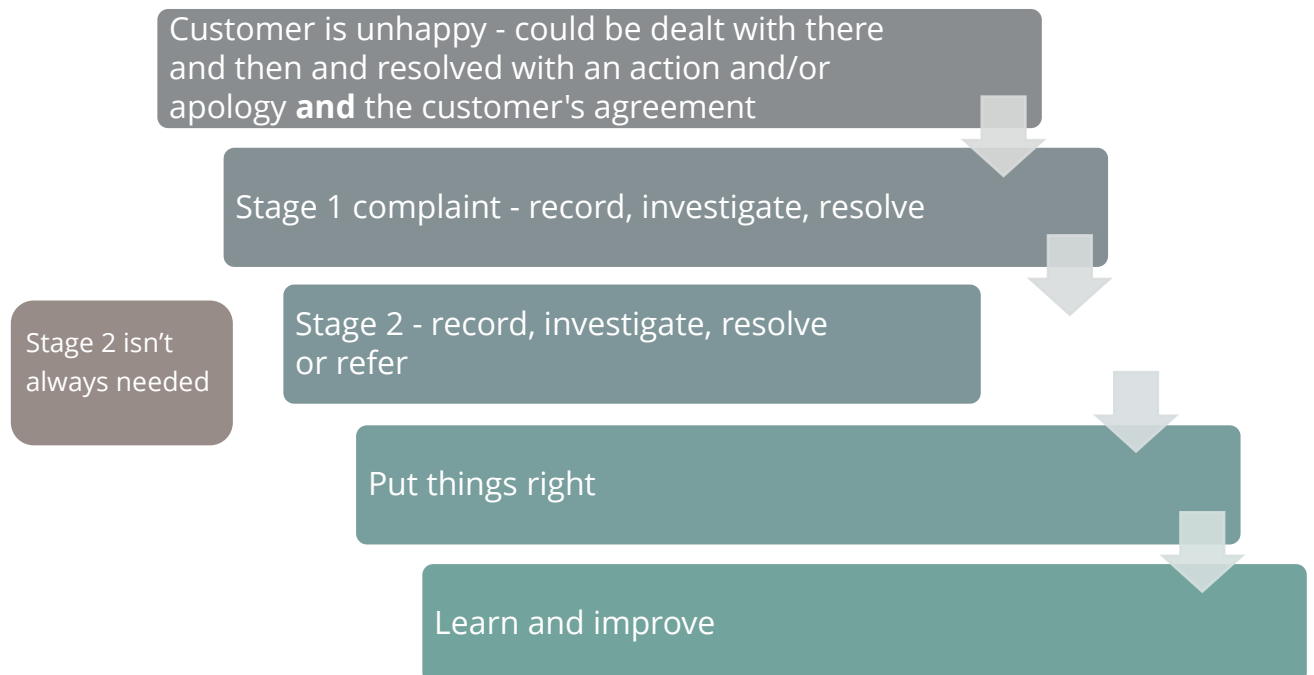


Complaints procedure

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1. Complaints overview



1.1 This procedure describes the steps taken to manage complaints at A2Dominion.

1.2 A2Dominion's complaints process follows:

- **Stage 1:** The initial recording of a complaint. This requires a response from a complaints and resolution caseworker who will investigate and recommend a resolution to a Head of Service or a Director
- **Stage 2:** If the customer is not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 complaint, the complaint is then referred to a review pathway for further investigation.

1.3 Customers can escalate to the Housing Ombudsman at any point in the process.

1.4 Once a complaint has been investigated, we will look to put things right and to learn and improve.

1.5 Complaints from customers about A2Dominion colleagues follow the same process as service complaints but will be assigned to the appropriate line manager at Stage 1.

2. Receiving a complaint

2.1 The complaints process is managed by the complaints and resolution service, but a customer may make a complaint to anyone working for A2Dominion.


2.2 If the customer agrees, a complaint may be resolved 'there and then' with an action and apology resolving the issue, without following the formal complaints process, if the customer agrees. For example, if a customer tells us about a

missed appointment, you could book another appointment which will meet the customer's needs.

2.3 If responding to complaints is not part of your role, you should pass on the relevant information to complaints@a2dominion.co.uk immediately. This should include the customer's name, email or telephone number and a short summary of the issue raised.

2.4 If you are not sure if it is a complaint, share it with the [complaints and resolution service](#).

2.5 Complaints must be acknowledged within **5 working days** of being made. If it is made over the telephone, i.e., to the contact centre, that telephone call would be considered as the acknowledgement. However, the complaints and resolution service will contact the customer to ensure that we have all the information to do a thorough investigation.

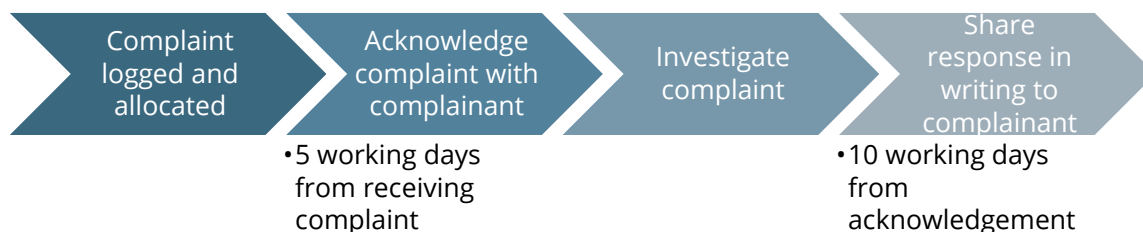


A complaint must be acknowledged within **5 working days**.

2.6 A complaint would normally need to be made within **6 months** of the issue happening, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the complaint is raised after this timescale, let the customer know we can't log a formal complaint, but that we will pass on their concerns to the relevant service area - and then do so.

3. Stage 1 complaints

3.1 Stage 1 complaints overview:




3.2 The complaints coordinator logs the complaint on the CRM system and allocates this to a complaints and resolution caseworker.

The customer drives the complaints process and the complaints and resolutions service manages it. That means the customer decides if they want to raise the complaint, escalate it to Stage 2 or escalate to the Housing Ombudsman.

3.3 We have **5 working days** from the day it is received by the complaints and resolution service to acknowledge the complaint and then a further **10 working days** to investigate the complaint.

- Inform A2Dominion's legal team if a solicitor has taken up the case. If the customer raises the complaint with a solicitor, we will



Once the complaint has been logged A2Dominion must respond within **10 working days**.

investigate the complaint until legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.

- Notify the customer that the complaints process is not a legal one.

Please note: If the customer tells you about court action or summons (including notices of intent) you should respond. You should also refer to the legal team for information/advice.

3.4 The complaints and resolution caseworker should contact the complaints champion. The complaints champion provides information about what happened from a business perspective. They will share what went wrong along with technical information. The champion should:

- Share information to help the caseworker respond to the complaint.
- Provide reasons why, if timescales are unrealistic or cannot be met, and will then ask the customer if they would agree to an extension, providing full details for any delays.
- Provide the complaints and resolution service with lessons learned and preventative actions to make sure the issue won't happen again.

3.5 The complaints and resolution service investigates the complaint. It is their responsibility to decide if the complaint should be upheld. Even if the complaint is not upheld the service will share lessons learned. The complaints champion is responsible for making sure these are embedded in our day-to-day work.

3.6 The complaints and resolution caseworker and the complaints champion will work together to provide a full response to the customer in writing, or by the preferred method of contact requested by the customer.

3.7 The caseworker should log updates on CRM.

4. Stage 2 complaints

4.1 The person receiving a request to escalate a complaint should update the CRM system and allocate to a complaints and resolution caseworker.

4.2 The escalation and support manager is responsible for managing the process and keeping the customer informed. There are two review pathways for Stage 2 complaints and the complaints and resolution service decides the appropriate pathway depending on the impact:

Director review	Review panel
Reviews complaints about a one-off issue	Reviews complaints that have a wider impact on A2Dominion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would apply to most Stage 2 complaints. • Customer requested the matter be resolved as quickly as possible. • The complaint at Stage 1 is not upheld, but the customer disagrees with our policy. This will allow us to examine our existing policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaint will require major works to resolve resulting in high costs of £5000+. • Complaint involves significant or repeated service failures, by more than one service area. • Complaint has wider risk or impact for the group. This could be for policies, financial liabilities, or could affect large numbers of customers (e.g., service charge complaints that affect entire schemes).

Director Reviews

4.3 Stage 2 complaints are undertaken by a nominated Head of Service or Director. It must take no longer than **20 working days**, timescales for each stage below:



4.4 The customer must get the decision of the Stage 2 review in writing, unless they have requested contact via another channel. This information must be recorded on CRM. All responses must include details of how to contact the [Housing Ombudsman Service](#) and, if upheld, how we intend to put things right (see the section on [Putting things right](#)).

Review panels

4.5 The escalation and support manager is responsible for arranging the review panel. It needs to include as many of the following as possible:

- A2Dominion Executive or an Independent Operations Director,
- Group Board Member,

- Customer Service Committee Member (a resident member),
 - The customer must be invited, and they can bring a friend or colleague with them, and
 - The complaints and resolution caseworker.
- 4.6 In some circumstances a review panel can happen with only one or two members of the panel, for example, if one of the panel members cancels. You must get the customer's permission to do this.
- 4.7 **Review panel location:** you should hold the panel hearing in one of A2Dominion's main offices, taking into account the customer's preference for the location where possible, including if they prefer a remote meeting (i.e., via Zoom or Teams).
- 4.8 If the customer does not wish to attend the panel hearing, or cancels a meeting date **two times**, the review panel will meet without them and the panel will share the decision with the customer in writing.
- 4.9 **Additional complaints:** we do not allow any new information on the complaint to be added at Stage 2. New information may be treated as a new complaint (at Stage 1). However, the escalation and support manager may use their discretion to collate these and advise the panel to rule on all at the hearing if the new information is connected to the current complaint.
- 4.10 The customer must get the decision of the review panel in writing unless they have requested contact via another channel. This information must be recorded on CRM. All responses must include details of how to contact the [Housing Ombudsman Service](#) and how we will put things right (see the section on [Putting things right](#)).

Concerns about a customer's behaviour

- 4.11 Where we have concerns about a customer's behaviour (for example abusive or threatening manner), we may opt not to hold a review panel but instead hold a Director review (which is held remotely). That can take place if:
- You have supporting evidence about the behaviour;
 - The relevant director agrees; and
 - The customer receives a letter explaining the decision
- 4.12 If the customer's actions were unacceptable on at least two occasions, a referral to the [Housing Ombudsman Service](#) is considered as the best option to ensure resolution.

5. Housing Ombudsman

- 5.1 A complaint can be raised with the Housing Ombudsman Service **at any stage of the process** for support, guidance or an independent review of the case.

- 5.2 The complaints and resolution service must notify customers of their options to refer to the Housing Ombudsman Service during both Stage 1 and/or Stage 2 of the process.
- 5.3 All Stage 1 and Stage 2 cases should be provided with information on how to escalate to the Housing Ombudsman Service after the final outcome is provided.
- 5.4 A2Dominion will comply fully with the Housing Ombudsman Service during any investigation and with the final determination, including any orders.

6. Putting things right

6.1 The table below sets out A2Dominion’s complaints response timescales:

Activity	Timescale
A response to the complaint is issued	Within 10 working days of a stage 1 complaint being logged or within 20 working days if agreed with customer
A response to the complaint is issued	Within 20 working days of a stage 2 complaint being escalated or within 30 working days if agreed with customer

- 6.2 Throughout, the process should be customer-led, allowing customers to inform us of their issues and their expectations regarding the resolution of their complaint. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, we should seek clarification and the complaint detail agreed between both parties.
- 6.3 In our response to the complaint, we will share the actions already taken and/or those we intend to take, to put things right. These may include:
 - Apologising
 - Explaining what happened
 - Reconsidering or changing a decision
 - Amending a record
 - Changing policies, procedures or practices
 - Sharing lessons learned

7. Compensation

- 7.1 If service delivery did not meet our expected standards check our Compensation policy to understand if compensation should be awarded and how much.
- 7.2 Compensation will be offset against any arrears, unless the customer has suffered a financial loss.

8. Closing a case

8.1 There are two ways to close a case:

- **Full resolution** – all issues raised have been addressed and there are no outstanding actions.
- **Promise based** – we have told the customer we will take future actions to fully resolve their complaint. The complaints and resolution service will share a named contact point in A2Dominion with the customer who is responsible for ensuring the agreed actions from the case are managed through to resolution.

8.2 In either route, the case worker needs to update CRM with the outcome.

9. Definitions

9.1 **Complaint:** an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

Customers do not have to use the word complaint for an enquiry to be treated as such.

9.2 **Service request:** asking A2Dominion to do something, such as a repair, provide a service, manage a neighbour dispute, or provide information. However, a service request may become a complaint at any point if:

- a customer wants to raise a complaint, or
- has had to request a service more than once, or
- we fail to provide a service to our agreed standards.

Service requests should be signposted to the appropriate team ([see appendix 1](#)).

10. Who to contact

10.1 For any questions about this procedure please contact complaints@a2dominion.co.uk.

11. Associated documents

- Complaints policy
- Compensation policy
- Unacceptable actions by complainant policy

Appendix 1 – service requests

Service requests are managed outside the complaints process unless the customer wants to raise a complaint, or has had to request a service more than once, or we fail to provide a service to our agreed standards.

Service request	Action
A first request for a repair	Forward to the Contact Centre for logging / to provide and update if the target has not yet passed.
A repair, provision of service or action where the target completion date has not yet passed	Forward to the Contact Centre for logging / to provide and update if the target has not yet passed.
Neighbour disputes (refer to Anti-social Behaviour Policy)	Check the CRM system to see which officer manages the property or block then forward it to the relevant Estate Lead copying in their line manager.
A request for information	Customer Contact Centre
Complaints by staff (refer to Grievance Policy)	Direct to the line manager and / or Human Resources department.