

Good Neighbour Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A2Dominion believes everyone has the right to enjoy living in their own home. At times our customers may experience situations and behaviours which cause upset and frustration creating tensions between neighbours and the wider community.
- 1.2 Where this behaviour is not anti-social behaviour, as identified in our ASB policy, and unlikely to be a tenancy breach we will take a different approach to try to resolve disputes and foster good relations between our customers. We refer to this a Good Neighbour approach, as set out in this Good Neighbour policy.
- 1.3 In most cases, this policy will be relevant in situations that arise because of a circumstance rather than a genuine intention to cause someone harm, upset, or distress.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all A2Dominion customers regardless of tenure, when they are experiencing situations that may relate to Good Neighbour issues.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB):** Legislation describes housing related ASB as being behaviour that causes or is likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance. ASB is not covered by this policy.
- 2.2 There are behaviours or situations that can cause a person a nuisance but are not reasonable or appropriate to identify or categorise as ASB. Examples of activities that are not usually anti-social behaviour include the following (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Disputes or issues with parking
 - Positioning of wheelie bins or recycling bins
 - Boundary disputes
 - The noise of flushing toilets or someone walking around in their home, or other noises such as doors or cupboards closing



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- Cooking smells
 - A baby crying, or children playing (outside of safeguarding concerns)
 - Dogs barking
 - DIY during reasonable hours, or outside of reasonable hours if it is a one-off
 - The noise from washing machines, tumble dryers and other household appliances
 - Usual day to day living noise during reasonable hours (music, television, children) that can be heard through a party wall
 - The sound of loud arguments (for example overheard) that interfere with enjoyment of your own home activities
 - Experiencing hostility or disputes with neighbours, including staring, watching out of windows
 - Children playing ball games or cycling, using scooters or skateboards in a way that some may find dangerous (through risk of collision into pedestrians)
 - Untidy gardens or houses
- 2.3 **Dispute:** to argue about something. Depending on the point of view both parties could be right. This is different to ASB cases where there is a clear right and wrong party.
- 2.4 **Victim and perpetrator:** we will not identify a “perpetrator” or a “victim” under this policy. We will not look to find who is “at fault” through this policy. We expect most situations covered by this policy will have arisen because of a situation or circumstance rather than a genuine intention to cause someone harm, upset, or distress.
- 2.5 **Neighbour:** can be anyone living close to the customer or in the neighbourhood, including those living next door, directly above or below.

3. Policy aims and objectives

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to build good relationships between A2Dominion customers who are in dispute with their neighbours, or feel they are being affected by a behaviour from their neighbour(s).
- 3.2 We aim to work with customers to resolve disputes and prevent them from escalating into ASB. Where they do escalate, the ASB policy will apply.
- 3.3 In line with our ASB policy, this policy and A2Dominion will be harm focussed as opposed to risk focussed. A harm focussed approach looks at both the behaviour and the impact the behaviour is having. It assesses the harm the behaviour is having on the complainant, alleged perpetrator and the wider community.

4. Reporting concerns

- 4.1 If your neighbour is doing something that is making it difficult for you to enjoy your home, in most cases it is best to try to talk to them about it. They may not know how their actions are affecting you. There is information on [A2Dominion's website](#) on how to do this.
- 4.2 If this is unsuccessful, you may contact us for advice:
- Through our online customer portal My Account which is available on our website (www.a2dominion.co.uk)
 - Through our website: <https://a2dominion.co.uk/en/contact-us> if you don't have a customer account
 - By telephone on 0800 432 0077
- 4.3 We assess all reports of neighbour problems and decide what action to take according to priority and whether meet the criteria for anti-social behaviour or fall under this policy (Good Neighbour).

Activity	Timescale
We will let you know we have received your report and contact you for more information	Within 5 working days
We decide whether this is ASB or a Good Neighbour issue	If this is ASB, the timescales in that policy will apply
We will let you know how we plan to respond to your report	Within 10 working days of the report being logged or 5 working days if you are vulnerable (as per our Prioritisation policy)

- 4.4 We recognise that circumstances can change. Situations that fall under this policy can evolve into ASB. We will continue to assess each report made in line with our policies and procedures to ensure we manage reports appropriately and at an early stage.
- 4.5 We will record all interactions on the appropriate IT system, detailing clearly what was discussed and agreed.

5. Investigating reports

- 5.1 A2Dominion will treat all customers and neighbours (described as 'parties') equally and not label one a perpetrator and one a victim or complainant, as there may be reasonable explanations on both sides, or a conflict in living styles. We will remain impartial and try to understand the frustrations of all sides.
- 5.2 We expect all parties involved to work with us cooperatively in order to reach a solution. If parties refuse to a reasonable request to cooperate, we may be

unable to assist any further. In these cases, we will clearly communicate this decision and the reasons why it was made.

- 5.3 We will consider any support needs of those involved throughout the process. Personal circumstances can sometimes affect someone's tolerance, perception or ability to cope with situations. When we recognise that personal circumstances could be a contributory factor, we will work to identify suitable referrals and support, and we will aim to make these referrals within 5 working days if we feel the customer is vulnerable and can be prioritised.
- 5.4 It may be helpful for us to receive information about your health to best respond to your report. In these situations we may ask you to get this information for us or to sign a consent form to allow us to do so on your behalf.
- 5.5 Where consent is not provided, or you are not willing or able to share your personal information with us, we may be unable to help any further. However, we will make a safeguarding referral if we think it appropriate.

6. Working towards resolution

- 6.1 We will usually ask you if you can speak to your neighbour first to raise your concerns if it is safe to do so as set out previously. There is information on [A2Dominion's website](#) on how to do this.
- 6.2 If appropriate we may suggest some practical steps to help resolve the dispute, this could include:
- Using a Good Neighbour Card as an icebreaker. This is available to print out on [A2Dominion's website](#).
 - Mediation (meaning someone else working with the people involved to try to help resolve the situation)
 - We may suggest carrying out property inspections to possibly identify improvements that may help
 - Asking either or both parties to make reasonable adjustments to their lifestyle as part of being a good neighbour
 - Providing advice or signposting to other support
- 6.3 This is not a complete list, and our response will be appropriate to each situation. Any actions taken are likely to be informal and based on negotiation and conversation.
- 6.4 These situations are highly unlikely to involve people breaching their tenancy agreement and/or causing ASB, our response is very unlikely to lead to or include taking legal action. We are also unlikely to issue warnings to either party, as that would suggest one party is at fault over another.

- 6.5 If any agreements are made or advice is given we will share this with you in writing. If there is nothing further we are able to do we will also share with you along with the reasons why in writing.

7. Request for Confidentiality

- 7.1 This policy aims to support neighbours to build relationships which means if you wish to remain anonymous it is very unlikely we will be able to work with you to find a resolution. In these situations, we will be clear from the start that there is no further action we can take, and explain the reasons why, referring to this policy.
- 7.2 There will be times when we cannot guarantee confidentiality. This could include situations where we identify a safeguarding concern or where a criminal offence has taken place.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 This policy has been developed in consultation with teams across operations, policy, safeguarding, complaints and communities. It will also be shared with our customer scrutiny panel to ensure the policy is clear, fair and provides useful information.

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 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken for this policy.

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.
- 10.6 You can also contact the Data Protection Officer / Data Compliance team at governance@a2dominion.co.uk

11. Associated documents

- ASB Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

12. Record of amendments

Date	Details of amendment (include version number where applicable)	Name and job title
	First version of this policy	Sarita Gregory-Brook, Head of Neighbourhoods

Appendix: Behaviour Types

Each individual person has different tolerances, expectations and perceptions when deciding what behaviour is or isn't acceptable or appropriate to them, and this can fluctuate depending on their personal circumstance. This means that some people will see certain behaviour as "anti-social", but it doesn't necessarily mean it is unreasonable. We do not consider this type of behaviour to be ASB.

There may be behaviour that is clearly causing distress and upset to one resident, but the neighbour isn't intending to cause harm and/or said behaviour is not unreasonable.

This example above should be dealt with under this policy and not under the ASB policy and should not be referred to as anti-social behaviour at any point.

Example: Mr Smith and Mrs Brown

Mr Smith is using his property in a reasonable manner, with his children playing during the day. But the walls between the properties are thin and the sound is travelling, affecting Mrs Brown.

Mrs Brown feels the behaviour is anti-social and has stated this is affecting her wellbeing, but children playing during the day is not unreasonable behaviour. Neither party is in the right or the wrong.

A2Dominion will always consider the impact on a customer like Mrs Brown in this example, and the harm that is potentially being caused, this does not mean that we will consider Mr Smith to be at fault.

For example, if noise is transferring between properties due to poor sound installation and thin walls, this could be having a high impact on Mrs Brown and her wellbeing. However, if Mr Smith is undertaking reasonable activities, like his children playing during the day, it isn't fair for us to consider Mr Brown at fault even though the harm being caused is high.

In this type of situation, we are likely to focus on how we can resolve the situation. That may be by offering:

- Mediation
- Visit both properties to hear and discuss the issues directly. Check for soft furnishings, and signpost or help find support to purchase necessary items if needed.
- Request a surveyor to attend to see if we can make improvements to the sound insulation.

We will also consider how we can support Mrs Brown, and how we can work with Mr Smith to see what, if any, options are available to reduce the noise.