

Customer Domestic Abuse Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy outlines A2Dominion's approach to customers who are experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse.

1.2 This policy applies to the whole of the A2Dominion Group.

1.3 The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is (as at 2021):

“any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

1.4 There are further definitions in [the definitions section](#).

2. Policy aims and objectives

2.1 This policy aims to give an overview of our approach to supporting victims/survivors of domestic abuse, including children within the household. We recognise that domestic abuse is a part of the wider issue of violence against women and girls (VAWG), and as such primarily impacts women, although we acknowledge that anybody can be a victim of domestic abuse; as such, our approach to domestic abuse will aim to support all victims regardless of gender.

2.2 As a non-statutory agency, we will work in partnership with relevant statutory partners to respond to concerns, disclosures, or incidents of domestic abuse.



Our accessibility and translations service

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- 2.3 This policy is supported by our Customer Domestic Abuse Procedure, which provides staff with more detailed guidance on what to do in the event of encountering domestic abuse whilst working with a customer.
- 2.4 We encourage any customers experiencing domestic abuse to report this to the police, a domestic abuse agency, or to a member of our staff. Customers can report domestic abuse to any member of A2Dominion staff and can request a staff member of the opposite gender to the perpetrator to manage their report.
- 2.5 For information on how we can support a victim/survivor of domestic abuse, please consult our Domestic Abuse Procedure.

3. Values

- 3.1 The following values inform our approach to domestic abuse survivors and perpetrators.
- 3.2 **Integrity** - Our intention is to increase victim/survivor safety and housing security and hold perpetrators to account for their harm. We will reflect this integrity in all interactions with residents, staff, stakeholders and the public.
- 3.3 **Collaboration** - internal and external collaboration is at the heart of our domestic abuse response.
- Specialist domestic abuse services (including services for ethnic minority victims/survivors, LGBTQIA+, disabled victims/survivors and services for other minority groups) are recognised as partners and collaborators.
 - We will demonstrate true collaboration with all agencies and professionals who have a role to play in the Coordinated Community Response to domestic abuse, both at a strategic and operational level, and through multi-agency information sharing and coordination forums.
 - We will seek out partner agencies, develop meaningful relationships and referral pathways and participate in relevant governance boards.
 - We will demonstrate true collaboration with victims/survivors of domestic abuse, recognising that they are the experts of their experiences and their needs to access support and housing security. Our interactions with residents will convey our belief in them, and our actions will demonstrate that we have listened to and heard the victim/survivor.
 - Victims/survivors will be meaningfully included in the development, delivery, and evaluation of our services, based on their desired participation.
- 3.4 **Empathy** – empathy will be demonstrated in every decision that might impact the welfare of customers who are experiencing domestic abuse.
- We will sensitively and safely seek to understand the complete context of a person's situation, ensuring they are not forced to repeatedly share their story, relive their experiences, or risk re-traumatisation. Additionally, we will be adaptable in our response to meet the needs of the victim/survivor.

- We will fully consider an individual's experiences of abuse, as well as their unique cultural background, life experiences, health conditions, disabilities, substance abuse issues, and other factors that may create barriers to accessing support.
- 3.5 **Empowerment** – We aim to ensure that customers feel listened to and empowered to make decisions about their housing and safety.
- Decisions and outcomes will be based, as far as possible, on the victims'/survivors' needs and wishes. We will work in collaboration with victims/survivors to make decisions.
 - We will also encourage and enable customers to be involved in development, delivery and evaluation of services that impact victims.
- 3.6 **Respect** – We have a culture of respect, both internally and externally, where people are free to express their needs. Respect will be present in every contact with residents and staff, in case notes and referral language, and in decisions regarding how to support victims/survivors of domestic abuse.
- 3.7 **Accountability** – A2Dominion staff will demonstrate accountability in their interactions with customers. They will also practice transparency by openly acknowledging any limitations in their knowledge and support, as well as any gaps in the services provided.
- 3.8 **Non-judgmental belief** - A2Dominion will create a supportive environment where victims/survivors can feel confident that they will be believed, listened to, and heard. This environment stems from our commitment to helping individuals and families thrive. Additionally, our non-judgmental approach will also extend to perpetrators, as we support them in accessing services meant for them.
- 3.9 **Person-centred response** - Our response will be tailored to meet the specific needs of each individual. Staff are provided with the appropriate training to equip them with the knowledge, tools and skills needed to provide individual, trauma-informed support and consider any barriers that individuals should aim to overcome.
- 3.10 **Victim/survivor safety** – We will create safe homes and communities where perpetrators are held to account for their behaviour. We recognise that the safety of those who are experiencing domestic abuse is paramount and that safe intervention starts by talking to victims/survivors and asking them what they need and want to happen.

4. Training and support

- 4.1 A2Dominion shares information on what support is available if you are being abused in your home on our website [here](#).
- 4.2 As a part of staff induction, all A2Dominion staff receive baseline domestic abuse awareness training.

- 4.3 All customer facing staff (staff who have contact with members of the public and residents) are equipped with the skills, tools and knowledge, to respond to domestic abuse safely, effectively, and consistently and to put our Domestic Abuse policies and procedures into practice.
- 4.4 All customer facing staff (staff who have contact with members of the public and residents) will undertake continued learning and development. This may include reflective practice, shadowing and co-location/placements with specialist local services and other organisations.
- 4.5 Each team that provides direct advice, support and contact with customers has access to a designated Domestic Abuse Champion, details of which can be found on "The Hub". Domestic Abuse Champions will help our staff to support customers, helping them access appropriate information and services outside of A2Dominion, including, but not limited to, specialist services in local areas, domestic abuse refuges, helplines, citizens advice and legal support.
- 4.6 Domestic Abuse Champions will have enhanced training, understanding and awareness of domestic abuse and links to partner agencies to provide support.
- 4.7 All staff have access to an internal specialist Safeguarding team, who will also support in the approach to domestic abuse cases. The Safeguarding team will advise on appropriate next steps to reduce the risk of further harm, which may include referrals to the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) or making reports to police.

5. Partnership working

- 5.1 We actively seek to initiate and maintain productive partnership relationships, which will support us when managing domestic abuse cases and will ensure the best possible outcomes for victims/survivors. This includes working with other agencies to publicise information relating to domestic abuse, both for victims/survivors and perpetrators.
- 5.2 When we need to share information with external agencies, we will always endeavour to do so with the permission of the victim/survivor. However, we recognise that in some circumstances we need to share information without permission, for example to safeguard children in the household.

6. Definitions

- 6.1 **Controlling behaviour** - Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from finances and sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour which can substantially affect their day-to-day activities.

- 6.2 **Coercive behaviour** – coercive behaviour is an act or pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.
- 6.3 **Honour based violence (HBV)** – HBV is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed by a perceived need to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. Honour can be the motivation, excuse or justification behind a range of violent acts against women and girls. In cases where there is concern that HBV may be present, normal Domestic Abuse procedures may need to be adapted to ensure that communication with the family does not place the victim or child at increased risk (i.e. increased risk of being removed from the country to face forced marriage). Therefore, when disclosing to Social Services and/or the Police, HBV **must** be disclosed.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 This policy has been developed by Specialist Housing, in collaboration with Safeguarding, General Needs Housing, People Services, Communications, and Learning and Development.
- 7.2 Clients and stakeholders form part of the regular review process of all A2Dominion policies and procedures.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 We will provide this policy in large print, or translated to another language, if required; please contact translate@a2dominion.co.uk.
- 8.4 This policy is also available in simplified language.
- 8.5 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for this policy.

9. Data Protection Statement

- 9.1 The protection of personal data is of great importance to A2Dominion Group and more than just a legal obligation.
- 9.2 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
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 For information on how we collect, store, process and use customers' personal data, please visit our website.
- 9.5 For employee related privacy statement, please contact People Services at people.support@a2dominion.co.uk.
- 9.6 You can also contact the Data Protection Officer / Data Compliance team at governance@a2dominion.co.uk.

10. Associated documents

- Staff Domestic Abuse Policy
- Domestic Abuse Procedure
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Anti-social Behaviour Policy
- Eviction Policy (General Needs Housing)
- Terminating a Licence Procedure (Specialist Housing only)
- Terminating an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) Procedure (Specialist Housing only)
- Repairs Procedure
- Lone Working Procedure
- Employee Assistance Program
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Duty to refer