

A guide to
**Antisocial
behaviour**

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We believe that everyone has the right to live the way they want to, as long as they do not spoil other people's quality of life. This means being tolerant, accepting and respecting the needs and choices of others.

We want to make sure our homes, neighbourhoods and estates are peaceful and safe places to live. We take reports of antisocial behaviour very seriously and we will work together with you and other agencies to put things right, where we have the powers and ability to do so. When problems are caused by unacceptable behaviour, this is called antisocial behaviour.

What is antisocial behaviour?

Antisocial behaviour can be any act that causes fear, worry, alarm or distress to other people, affecting their quality of life. It can be anything from noise or repeated nuisance, to serious violence and other crimes. It includes but is not limited to:

- intimidating people or behaviour
- illegal drug activity
- behaviour relating to alcohol abuse
- repeatedly playing loud music outside of reasonable hours
- noisy visitors
- constant shouting

Other types of antisocial behaviour

Antisocial behaviour can be known by other names such as 'harassment' or 'hate-related incidents' which include deliberate action against one or more people, usually (but not always) because of their:

- race or ethnic origin
- disability
- age
- sexuality
- gender
- learning difficulties
- religious beliefs
- HIV or AIDS status.

Racial harassment is 'an incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person' and is a criminal offence. It can be in many forms, which include:

- verbal racial abuse and name calling
- printed material and literature
- graffiti
- physical assault
- damage to property
- threats and intimidation
- unjustified complaints about noise
- unjustified complaints about smells and uncleanliness
- victimisation and bullying of children by neighbours or other children
- false or malicious complaints
- abusive text messages or phone calls.



Domestic abuse happens in a close or family-type relationship, and becomes a pattern of threatening and controlling behaviour. This can include forced marriages. There are many different forms of domestic abuse, including:

- physical
- sexual
- emotional
- psychological
- financial, such as refusing to give you any money to live on.

Our policy on antisocial behaviour

We are committed to taking action against antisocial behaviour and harassment.

We will offer advice and support to anyone who reports it. We will also contact you when the situation is resolved to see how satisfied you were with the way we dealt with it. If we do not have the evidence or the power to resolve your situation, and are therefore unable to resolve your complaint, we will provide you with advice.

How do I report antisocial behaviour?

Online: www.a2dominion.co.uk/asb

By email: customer.services@a2dominion.co.uk

By phone: 0800 432 0077

Text: 07537 401858

By writing to, or visiting, your local office.

- If you live in our sheltered accommodation, contact your Scheme Manager.
- If you live in our supported accommodation, contact your Project Worker.
- If you live in our onsite NHS, student or temporary accommodation, contact your Housing Officer.

Anonymous complaints

We will try to maintain anonymity of complainants who do not wish for their identity to be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator, however our actions to address the matter may be limited.

We may not have control over the identification of a complainant if:

- the perpetrator guesses who the complainant is
- the complainant's identity is disclosed during the legal process.

How quickly will we deal with antisocial behaviour?

We aim to initially respond to all new cases of antisocial behaviour within one working day. We will speak to the complainant to agree an action plan with them, which we will then confirm in writing. We will also contact the complainant at least once a month while the complaint remains open with us.

Once I have reported antisocial behaviour - What will happen next?

1. Speak to the person responsible

At first, we will usually ask you to make a friendly approach to the neighbour causing the antisocial behaviour. This is often the simplest way to sort out issues and can stop things getting worse. They may not realise that they are causing you problems, and may change their behaviour.

You should think about what you want to say to them beforehand, and try to stay calm and reasonable. It would be helpful if you described the problem clearly, giving times, dates and what happened, and explained how it affects you and your family. It is important to remember not to react badly, and become angry and frustrated. If you do, it will weaken any case and may prevent any action that we may take later. If you retaliate, your neighbour may also be able to make a claim against you.

In cases where neighbours are complaining against each other, and we do not have the evidence to help us to take action, we may advise you to speak to your neighbour to try and resolve the situation yourself, or seek independent legal advice to look for your own solutions.

If you have suffered violent behaviour or harassment from your neighbour, or if you feel threatened by them in any way, do not try to sort things out yourself. In these circumstances, please contact us and the police.

If you are a vulnerable resident and would find it difficult to go and see your neighbour, please contact the police, or contact us and we will try to provide you with support.

2. Non-legal action

If you have spoken to your neighbour and the situation has not improved, we can refer you and your neighbour to an independent mediation service.

Mediation helps both parties to find out their needs, explain the issues and look at possible solutions. The mediator will listen to both sides of the story without bias and help you to come to an agreement. Mediation is confidential and, if you are a tenant, we will pay for the service. We may also put you in touch with the police or

an environmental health team. We can work with these agencies and other professional bodies to help sort out any issues.

We can also visit your neighbour and warn them formally of the consequences of breaching their tenancy agreement or lease. Mediation will only work if there is a breach we can take action on.

If you do not wish for us to speak to your neighbour about the issue you raise, there may be very little we can do to help resolve your issue.

3. Legal action

If non-legal remedies do not work and the behaviour continues, we will consider taking legal action and enforcing the tenancy agreement or lease.

For example, we can apply to the court for an injunction to stop certain behaviour or for a possession order against someone's property, which may allow us to evict a tenant.

We cannot take legal action without your help and support. This will involve you keeping a written record of incidents, or using a small tape recorder

to describe the incident, and making a note of all dates and times to use as evidence. Please ask us for a copy of our incident diary form to record the antisocial behaviour.

If the case goes to court, we will support you through this, making sure that you feel comfortable and safe. We will also pay for your transport and other expenses if you are a witness. Not all cases that are referred to court result in eviction because the decision rests with the judge.

Tools and other powers

There are several other actions we can take to help stop and prevent antisocial behaviour. These include:

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC) or Family Contracts

These are voluntary agreements signed by the person carrying out the antisocial behaviour, us as the landlord and other agencies involved in stopping the behaviour. It is not a legal document, but it can be used as evidence in court to show the perpetrator was given a chance to change their behaviour. If members of the same family each sign an ABC, this is known as a Family Contract, which works in the same way. ABCs and Family Contracts usually last up to six months.

Parenting Contract

This is a voluntary contract between us and the parent of a young person who is carrying out antisocial behaviour. It can last up to six months and helps the parent take responsibility for the behaviour of their child.

Community Trigger

This gives victims and communities the right to request a review of their case, and brings organisations like us together with local councils and the police to take a problem-solving approach to find a solution.

Mediation

If the complaint is a lifestyle matter or a personal dispute, we will not investigate any further and may offer mediation or advise personal resolution.

Injunctions

We can apply for an injunction to stop anyone over the age of ten from committing activities that lead to antisocial behaviour.

Repossession of your home

In some cases, if a serious crime has been committed, A2Dominion can apply to court under Mandatory Grounds for Possession of your home. This will always be a last resort, but where necessary we will pursue this action.

Working with other agencies

We may seek assistance from other agencies. For example, we can contact the police to obtain evidence to support legal action and we can also seek support for our residents from social services, children's services and mental health teams.

What powers do other agencies have?

The police are able to prosecute against:

- illegal and immoral use of premises, such as drug dealing and prostitution
- dangerous dogs
- assault
- arson
- harassment
- homophobic and racial incidents
- threats of violence
- criminal damage or vandalism.

Environmental health teams are able to prosecute against:

- noise, such as very loud music
- dog fouling
- dogs barking continuously
- pollution risks, like overgrown gardens
- vermin infestation.

Social services teams are able to prosecute against:

- neglect or abuse of children
- neglect or abuse of older people
- neglect or abuse of vulnerable people at risk.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) can prosecute against abuse or neglect of animals.

For more information, contact your local police station or local council.

Contact us

Online:

www.a2dominion.co.uk/customers

By email:

customer.services@a2dominion.co.uk

By phone:

0800 432 0077

Follow us online:

 www.facebook.com/a2dominion

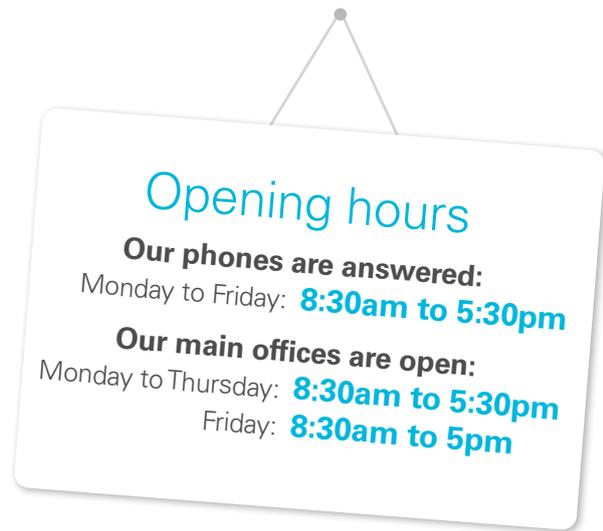
 www.youtube.com/a2dominion

In person or in writing:

To one of our main or local offices.

For a full list of our offices and their opening times, go to

www.a2dominion.co.uk/contact



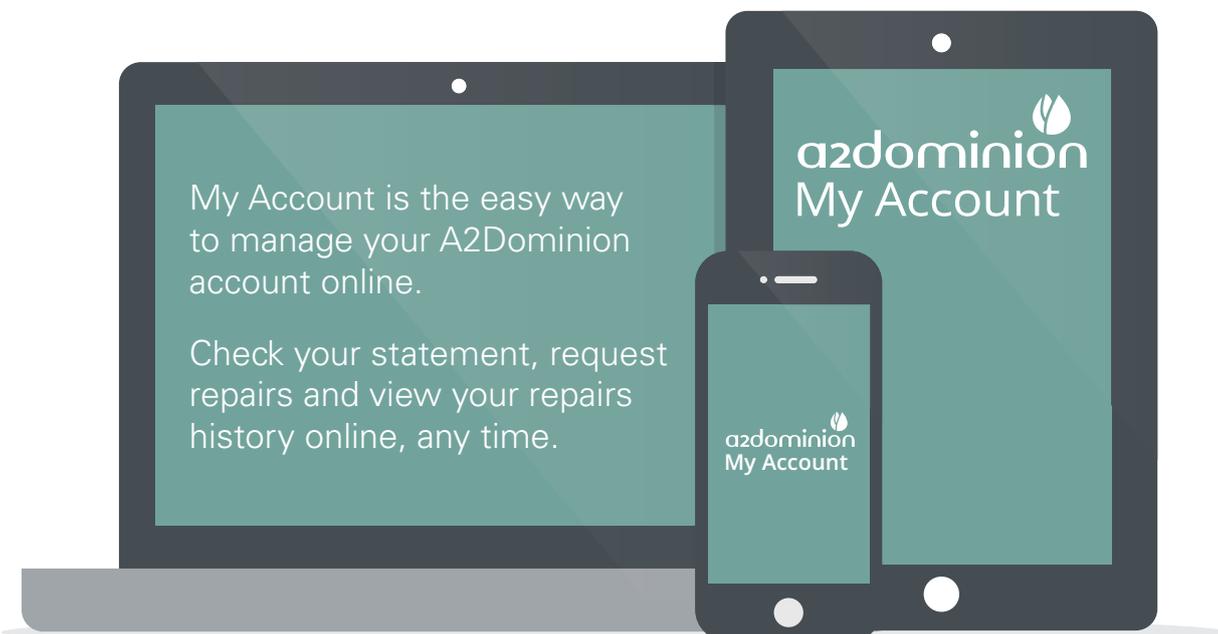
Our service standards

Please visit our website for a full list of our service standards:

www.a2dominion.co.uk/servicestandards

Translations

We will consider requests for translations into other languages and formats, including large print, audio and Braille.



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