



Date: December 09

If you require a copy of this letter or the report in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call 0844 798 7070.

Dear Resident,

Re - The results of the short notice inspection at A2Dominion South (A2DS)

A team from the Audit Commission has recently inspected some of the housing services provided by your landlord. This letter tells you what we found.

We looked at how A2DS manages its repairs service and its approach to resident involvement. In particular we concentrated on:

- how well A2DS involves residents in delivering services and the opportunities that residents have to be involved and influence decisions; and
- how well repairs are carried out to tenants' homes.

We also asked the following questions. These are called 'cross-cutting themes', as they apply to all of the services we inspect:

- how easy it is for tenants to access these services;
- what tenants think of A2DS's customer care;
- how A2DS caters for different peoples' needs; and
- does it provide value for your money in these services.

Overall we found that A2DS does things reasonably well. We found strengths in most of the areas looked at including the way A2DS listens to residents' views and involves them in deciding how services should be provided. The main area to improve is to ensure that repairs are carried out quickly and to a good standard. Below we tell you some of the key things we found:

1. In general (the cross cutting themes)

The service is easy to contact but the way complaints are dealt with needs to improve. The association does not have enough information about its tenants to ensure individual needs are being met. The approach to ensuring value for money in services is positive and any savings made are being re-invested in services which benefit tenants.

2. Responding to repairs reported by tenants

Tenants have to wait a long time for repairs to be completed, often involving a number of visits by contractors. The service receives a high number of complaints from tenants and arrangements to check that repairs are carried out to a high standard are not effective.

3. Gas servicing

Gas servicing is up to date, the contract is managed well and the importance of gas safety is well publicised. However the service is failing to measure how satisfied tenants are with this part of the service.

4. Involving tenants

Residents have a range of opportunities to be involved, and are able to influence how services are delivered and improved. However, sometimes the high number of documents presented to tenants at key meetings could limit opportunities for discussion and effective decision making.

To help your landlord improve its service to all residents, we have made the following recommendations:

- it should improve the way that it handles tenants' complaints;
- improve the information it holds about the needs of all tenants to deliver improvements; and
- ensure that repairs are delivered quickly and to a good standard.

The report will shortly be available on our website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing. You can also find further information about housing inspections there. Alternatively the association will be able to let you have a copy of the report.

3. Next steps

We have asked A2DS to work with its residents over the next few weeks to develop an action plan showing how it intends to implement our recommendations by February 2010. Once we have their finished action plan we will consider the likelihood of A2DS improving the inspected services. We will then publish our final report. We hope to publish this by March 2010.

The Association's regulator, the Tenant Services Authority will work with them to make sure that the recommendations in the inspection report are acted upon and improvements to your service are delivered.

I hope this letter has been of interest to you.

Yours faithfully

Judine Alleyne
Principal Inspector
Housing Inspectorate
Audit Commission

CC Tenant Services Authority regulator
A2Dominion South board members

The Audit Commission uses a four point scale for judging the quality of services, as follows:

Strengths considerably outweigh weaknesses;
Strengths outweigh weaknesses;
A balance of strengths and weaknesses; and
Weaknesses outweigh strengths.