

nominet<sup>®</sup>

## Consultation on second level domain registration in .uk

July 2013

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# 1. Introduction

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The domain name landscape is rapidly changing. Consumers and registrants will soon be faced with an array of new domain extensions as part of the generic Top Level Domain expansion. At Nominet we are committed to exploring ways to support those businesses and individuals who are part of the .uk namespace and to ensuring that .uk remains relevant and can compete in this changing environment. It is our view that potentially allowing registration at the second level is an important component of how we innovate in this space moving forward.

In October 2012 we launched a three month consultation seeking stakeholder feedback on a set of proposals that would underpin the potential release of second level domains. A summary of the feedback was published in February 2013 and can be accessed on our [website](#).

The consultation process was the largest ever carried out by Nominet with a substantial number of responses which helped us understand what was important to our stakeholders. It was clear from this feedback that there was support for registrations at the second level but that the original proposal could not proceed. We have made significant changes in order to try and address the concerns raised and strike a better balance between the needs of different stakeholders. The revised proposal forms the basis for this consultation.

We are committed to the existing .uk registrants and believe that offering the opportunity to register a shorter domain name would help the .uk namespace remain competitive. This would attract registrants to a domain we are making trusted, safe and relevant. Therefore we intend to allow second level domain registration subject to stakeholder feedback to this consultation. This, together with the development of a new Security Road Map for the entire .uk namespace will help Nominet meet its objectives to:

- Maintain the relevance of the .uk name space in a rapidly developing market;
- Provide additional choice for registrants in the .uk space and meet market demand;
- Fulfil Nominet's public purpose by increasing security and trust in the .uk name space; and
- Progress Nominet's commercial development.

We recognise that enabling second level domain registration would be a significant change to the .uk domain space. We are committed to working with all our stakeholders in order to deliver any proposed changes in the right way. We are grateful to you for your feedback on the proposed changes.

## 2. About you

We would like to know a bit more about you to assist us in evaluating your feedback. We would like to use this information to keep you informed of this consultation and relevant .uk policy, and to invite you to .uk policy events that may be of interest to you. You can opt out if you do not want us to do this. We will not use the information you have provided for any other purposes and we will never give your information to third parties.

The feedback we receive will inform our decision making on the way forward. If you agree, we will publish your response once this decision has been made. You can choose whether you would like us to do so. We may include your feedback in our summary, but this will not be personally identifiable.

The data in this consultation is being collected and processed on Nominet’s behalf by Nomensa. Your data will be processed solely at Nominet’s direction and no copies will be retained by Nomensa once the consultation is complete. Both Nominet and Nomensa are registered as data controllers with the Information Commissioner’s Office.

Please answer all questions marked with an asterisk (\*).

\* Name: .....

Position: .....

Organisation: .....

\* Email: .....

Telephone: .....

Address Line 1: .....

Address Line 2: .....

Address Line 3: .....

Town: .....

County: .....

Postcode: .....

\* I would like you to keep me informed of this consultation

Yes  No

\* I would like you to keep me informed of future .uk policy and .uk policy events

Yes  No

\* Please tell us about your organisation type.

- Academia
  Company with less than 250 employees
  Company with more than 250 employees  
 Individual
  Public Body
  Representative Body (eg Trade Association)  
 Other, please give details below

\* Please tell us about your sector

- Civil Society
  Consumer Interests
  Financial Services
  Government
  ICT  
 Intellectual Property
  Law Enforcement
  Legal
  Registrar
  Other, please give details below

\* Please tell us if you already hold a domain name in one of the existing second levels in .uk (e.g. .co.uk)

- Yes  No

\* Are you a Nominet registrar?

- No  Yes: Please provide details of your tag(s)

\* The feedback we receive will inform our decision on the changes to be made to registrations at the second level. We will publish all formal stakeholder responses once this decision has been made along with a summary. Please tell us if you are happy for us to publish your response by selection from the options below:

- Yes I am happy for Nominet to publish my response with my name and organisation only  
 No I do not want Nominet to publish my response.

### 3. How to complete this consultation

The consultation package is comprised of two documents, the [Consultation on second level domain registration in .uk](#) and [Background and further detail](#). You may also find the [Summary of feedback](#) to the first round of consultation useful in preparing your comments on the proposals. A link to the [Q&As](#) is also provided.

The Second Level Domain Registration consultation is made up of five sections as listed below. We are seeking your comments on the content of any of these, or you may simply prefer to provide some general comments. You can do so at the bottom of this page.

Individual sections:

- [The proposal for second level domain registration.](#)
- [Registration process for registering second level domains.](#)
- [Release process for the launch of second level domain registration.](#)
- [Reserved and protected names.](#)
- [General views.](#)

We would welcome your views on the revised proposal before **23 September 2013**.

In providing your feedback we would be grateful if you would consider whether the revised proposal to allow second level domain registration would meet our objectives to ensure .uk remains trusted, relevant and competitive. We would also be interested in your views on whether there would be an improved, fairer, or more cost effective way of achieving these objectives.

If you wish to submit any general comments rather than comment on each individual section please feel free to provide them in the space below.

## 4. The proposal for second level domain registration

*This proposal seeks to strike a better balance between the differing needs of our stakeholders and respond to the concerns and feedback raised to the initial consultation. We have 'decoupled' the security features from the proposal to address concerns regarding the potential creation of a 'two tier' domain space and compulsion to register in the second level. We have set out a more efficient registration process to enhance trust in the data and put forward an equitable, cost effective release mechanism.*

4.a Do you agree with the proposal to enable second level domain registration in the way we have outlined?

Yes  No

4.b Please tell us your reasons why.

## 5. Registration process for registering second level domains

*We believe that validated address information and a UK address for service would promote a higher degree of consumer confidence as well as ensure that we are in a better position to enforce the terms of our Registrant Contract. We propose that registrant contact details of registrations in the second level would be validated and verified and we would also make this an option available in the third levels that we manage.*

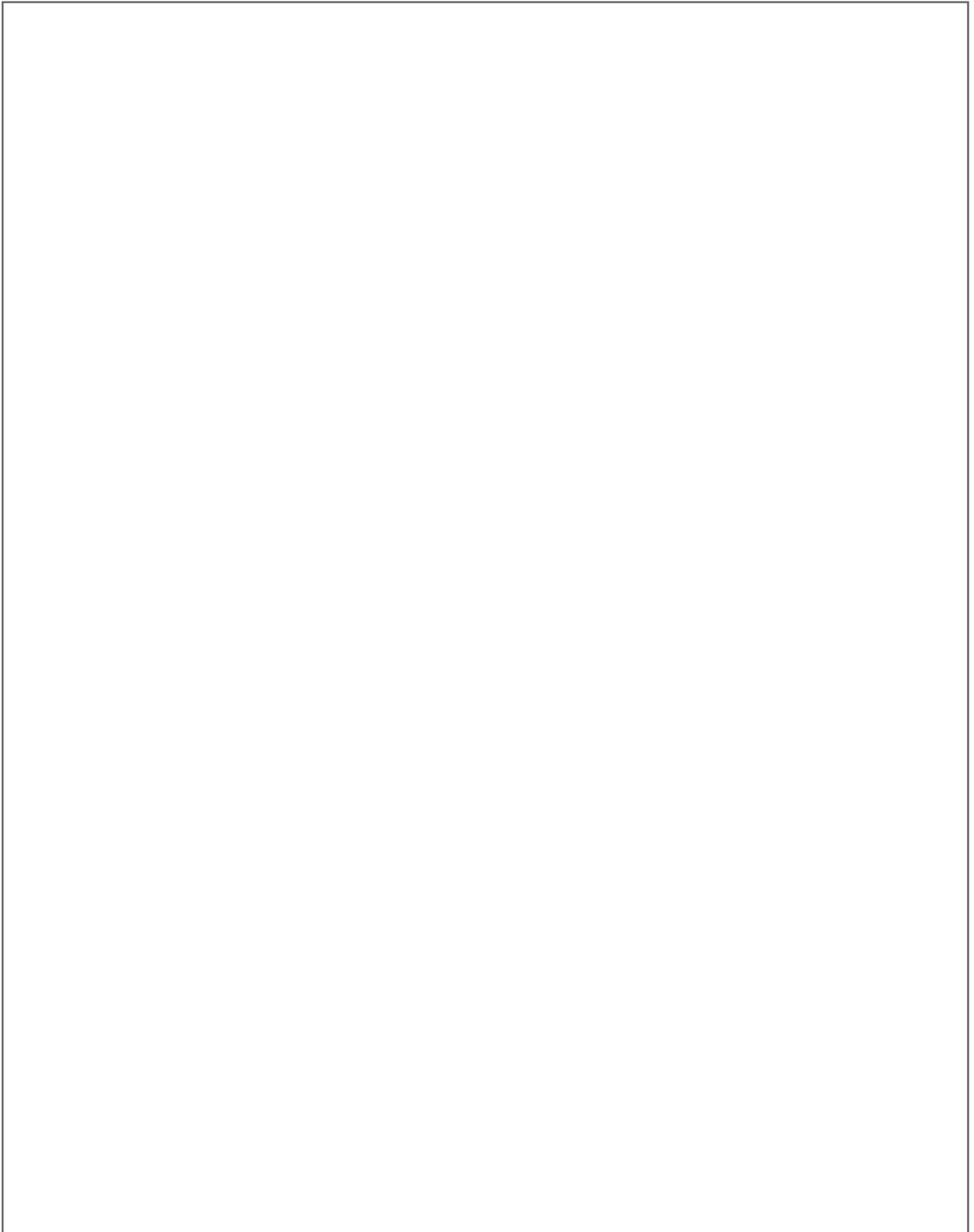
5.a Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the proposed registration requirements we have outlined, and your reasons why. In particular, we welcome views on whether the requirements represent a fair, simple, practical, approach that would help achieve our objective of enhancing trust in the registration process and the data on record.

## 6. Release process for the launch of second level domain registration

*The release process prioritises existing .uk registrations in the current space by offering a six month window where registrants could exercise a right of first refusal. We believe this approach would be, the most equitable way to release registrations at the second level. Where a domain string is not registered at the third level it would be available for registration on a first come, first served basis at the start of the six month period or at the end of this process, if the right of first refusal has not been taken up.*

6.a Please tell us your views on the methodology we have proposed for the potential release of second level domains. We would be particularly interested in your suggestions as to whether this could be done in a fairer, more practical or more cost-effective way.

6.b Are there any categories of domain names already currently registered which should be released differently, e.g. domains registered on the same day, pre-Nominet domains (where the first registration date may not be identified with certainty) and domains released in the 2011 short domains project?



6.c We recognise that some businesses and consumers will want to consider carefully whether to take on any potential additional costs in relation to registering a second level domain. Therefore we are seeking views on:

- Whether the registrant of a third level domain who registers the equivalent second level should receive a discount on the second level registration fee;
- Developing a discount structure for registrants of multiple second-level .uk domains;
- Offering registrants with a right of first refusal the option to reserve (for a reduced fee) the equivalent second level name for a period of time, during which the name would be registered but not delegated.

Please tell us your views on these options, or whether there are any other steps we could take to minimise the financial impact on existing registrants who would wish to exercise their right of first refusal and register at the second level.

## 7. Reserved and protected names

*We propose to restrict the registration of <.uk.uk> and <.com.uk> in the second level to reflect the very limited restrictions currently in force in the second level registries administered by Nominet. In addition, we would propose to reserve for those bodies granted an exemption through the Government's Digital Transformation programme, the matching domain string of their .gov.uk domain in the second level.*

7.a Please give us your views on whether our proposed approach strikes an appropriate balance between protecting internet users in the UK and the expectations of our stakeholders regarding domain name registration. Can you foresee any unintended complications arising from the policy we have proposed?

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## 8. General views

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8.a Are there any other points you would like to raise in relation to the proposal to allow second level domain registration?

8.b Are there any points you would like to raise in relation to this consultation?

[www.nominet.org.uk](http://www.nominet.org.uk)

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