

ALMO SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

1. The ALMO Support Framework is a resource to help ALMOs improve their performance. It has been drawn up by DCLG together with ALMOs, the NFA, local authorities, the LGA, ALG, Housing Inspectorate, Government Offices and Community Housing Task Force.
2. The framework is designed to assist ALMOs:
 - that may have difficulties achieving the initial two-star rating from the Housing Inspectorate necessary before they can qualify for ALMO funding, and
 - those that have problems maintaining performance at that level after they have qualified.
3. Improved performance is a key objective of the ALMO initiative, along with delivering decent homes. Past performance has never been a barrier to a local authority being offered a place on the ALMO programme. Experience from the early rounds has demonstrated that setting up an ALMO can be a tremendous catalyst for improvement. Rather than discouraging bids from local authorities with poor past performance records, DCLG's approach is therefore to support such authorities in the pursuit of their chosen option to achieve decent homes.
4. Although some early ALMOs have qualified for funding at their second attempt after failing to achieve the necessary two-star rating in their first inspection, it is questionable whether the time and effort required to go through two inspections is the best use of resources. The minimum time between inspections is six months and may be longer depending on the action that needs to be taken. Therefore it is more effective for ALMOs to put the effort into qualifying for funding at their first attempt.
5. DCLG may require ALMOs to seek support through the framework where it appears that they are likely to have problems achieving the necessary inspection rating. A place on the ALMO programme may be made conditional on a local authority seeking specific support.
6. For ALMOs already on the programme, seeking or taking up support will not affect either their place on the programme or their offer of funding. Under the earlier rounds ALMOs were subject to the provision in the 2004 ALMO Guidance that if an ALMO took more than two years to qualify for funding after receiving section 27 consent it would normally lose its place on the programme and have to apply again under a subsequent round. However, as Round 6 is likely to be the last ALMO bidding round, this will no longer be possible. DCLG will therefore consider agreeing to timetables, which go beyond the two years between section 27 consent and achieving a successful inspection rating, if it is satisfied that an appropriate project plan and robust improvement strategy is in place. The ALMO's retention of a place on the programme may be made conditional on it seeking specific support through the Support Framework. However, a provisional funding allocation cannot be put on hold indefinitely and DCLG still reserves the right to review the position if sufficient progress fails to be demonstrated.
7. ALMOs on the support framework will be asked to draw up an improvement plan, for agreement with the GO/CHTF, setting out the steps they propose to take to implement the improvements necessary to secure a two star rating.

Who can the ALMO Support Framework help?

8. The support framework can assist any ALMO or local authority that has had its options appraisal signed off in favour of setting up an ALMO.

9. ALMOs and local authorities seeking support should do so as early in the process as possible. In signing off options appraisals GO/CHTF have assessed deliverability and identified those who may need support. This includes identifying where there is weak project management as well as performance on service delivery. This will help maximise the chances of success.

Forms of support

10. Support may take a number of forms and be provided from a number of sources. The table below sets out the main forms and sources of support and the roles of those involved.

Source of support	Type of support/role	Contact details
NFA/other ALMOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring • Peer Group Review • Advice on interim board appointments - either by suggesting board members or advising on the selection of board members • Secondment of key officers/board members • Advice on interim management • Advice on action plans • Putting ALMOs with particular weaknesses in touch with ALMOs that are strong in those areas • Advice on policy/performance management developments 	<p>National Federation of ALMOs 8-9 York Place SCARBOROUGH North Yorkshire YO11 2NP</p> <p>almos@hqnetwork.co.uk 01723 350099</p>
LGAs/LAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring • Peer Group Review • Seminars/workshops 	<p>Alice Roberts Economic & Environmental Policy Local Government Association Local Government House Smith Square LONDON SW1P 3HZ alice.roberts@lga.gov.uk Tel: 020 7664 3199</p> <p>Alice Ellison Association of London Government 59½ Southwark Street LONDON SE1 0AL 020 7934 9828 alice.ellison@alg.gov.uk</p>
Housing Inspectorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out offsite/desktop assessments, eg advice on action plans • Signpost the ALMO to learning opportunities • Act in a critical friend role • Share positive practice • Mentoring • Advice on timing and content of inspections 	<p>Graeme Bennett ALMO Inspection and Assessment Coordinator Audit Commission First Floor Millbank Tower Millbank LONDON SW1P 4HQ g-bennett@auditcommission.gov.uk 07799 581872</p>
GOs/CHTF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead role with ALMOs needing support • Hold regular meetings • Advice on governance 	<p>A full list of GO/CHTF contact details is attached.</p>

GOs/CHTF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress monitoring including reporting on progress to DCLG 	
DCLG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General advice and guidance Progress monitoring in liaison with GOs/CHTF Attendance at meetings as necessary 	Julia Gristwood Decent Homes Division 2/J4 Eland House Bressenden Place LONDON SW1E 5DU julia.gristwood@communities.gsi.gov.uk 020 7944 3713
Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed support for individual ALMOs Advice on action plans 	Various
Independent Tenants Advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for tenants Training for board members 	Various
Regional Centres of Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice and support on all aspects of the efficiency agenda 	Details of the nine Regional Centres of Excellence can be found on the website: www.rcoe.gov.uk
IDeA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent advice 	IDeA, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street LONDON EC1M 5LG ihelp@idea.gov.uk
IDeA/Housemark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local government services ALMO Peer Review programme 	Kamal Panchal - kamal.panchal@idea.gov.uk on 0207 296 6618 Helena Kirk helena.kirk@housemark.co.uk on 07984 912470

11. This table is not meant to be exhaustive. The framework is likely to evolve as it becomes operational and further options and contacts may be added.
12. ALMOs seeking assistance should contact the providers listed in the table direct. However, any action taken as a result should be reflected fully in the improvement plan agreed with GOs/CHTF. GOs/CHTF will monitor progress through regular meetings.
13. ALMOs need to work closely with their local authorities, who should provide whatever support they can, either financially or in kind, eg, through additional officer support.
14. ALMOs can also help themselves by carrying out more self-assessment and continuous assessment.

Cost of support

15. The cost of any support should be provided from existing resources - there will not be any additional DCLG resources available. However, such expenditure is in the best interests of the ALMO and its tenants and residents and as such should be seen as a worthwhile investment. The ALMO and the local authority should be prepared to put in the resources necessary. Where support is available from a number of sources, ALMOs should follow their usual procurement procedures to ensure that they can demonstrate value for money in their choice of supplier.

Government Office/Community Housing Task Force contacts

East

Solma Ahmed email: solma.ahmed@goeast.gsi.gov.uk
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East Midlands

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South East

Mary Marshall email: mary.marshall@gose.gsi.gov.uk
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Mark Norman email: mark.norman@gose.gsi.gov.uk
tel: 01483 882424

North East

David Siddle email: david.siddle@gone.gsi.gov.uk
tel: 07810 657289

North West

Paul Schofield email: paul.schofield@gonw.gsi.gov.uk
tel: 0161 952 4275 or 07775 706497

South West

Graham Hogg email: graham.hogg@gosw.gsi.gov.uk
tel: 0117 900 1824

West Midlands

Alan Rigby email: alan.rigby@gowm.gsi.gov.uk
tel: 07766 504319

Yorkshire and the Humber

Debbie France email: debbie.france@goyh.gsi.gov.uk
tel: 0113 283 5873