

ALMO USPs and Successes

Arms-length management organisations (ALMOs) have led a revolution in the management of council housing since they were first established in 2002. They are primarily responsible for managing and maintaining council housing on behalf of their local authorities, but fulfil a range of additional services which contribute to the wellbeing of communities and support local authorities to achieve their strategic priorities.

- The establishment of ALMOs, along with the performance regime which supported the movement, has led to a considerable improvement in housing management services, housing conditions and a new positive working culture within council housing organisations.
- ALMOs were established to ensure the tenant voice was heard in the delivery of council housing services from the boardroom to the front-line, and this continues to be a priority for ALMOs. Around one third of all ALMO Board Members are tenants, with the remaining positions filled by councillors and independents. In addition to formal roles, tenants can influence services and performance through a range of tenant empowerment mechanisms.
- ALMOs are a flexible local vehicle that local authorities can use to deliver housing and community solutions. They provide a clear focus on housing, have led on innovative solutions to community problems, while being fully accountable to the local authority.
- Despite an unfavourable policy environment, in 2018 ALMOs built, acquired or developed 1,949 homes. In the last five years ALMOs have contributed 7,000 new build and acquired homes, and have plans to build at least 7,265 over the next five years, although plans are being reviewed in the light of the lifting of the borrowing cap. ALMOs are good at developing challenging sites on behalf of their local authorities that other housing developers would not look at, such as infill sites.
- Although the sector is small, ALMOs have punched above their weight in national and regional awards across a breadth of areas, demonstrating the wide benefits of the ALMO model. Nottingham City Homes and Tower Hamlets Homes were UK Housing Landlord of the Year in 2018 and 2019. Stockport Homes was listed number three in the Sunday Times Top 100 Best Not for Profit organisations to work for in 2019.
- ALMOs leverage their assets, knowledge and skills to develop and deliver a range of additional services which support tenants and communities, and contribute to their parent local authority's strategic objectives. This includes:
 - Initiatives to tackle worklessness, including apprenticeship schemes, training, up-skilling and confidence-building programmes, advice and guidance, and presence within Job Centre Plus offices.
 - Tenancy sustainment programmes which support people to take on a tenancy, manage it, and build a strong foundation for living their lives well.
 - Financial wellbeing services which support tenants to manage their finances and cope with the roll-out of Universal Credit and welfare reform. As a sector we have contributed a wealth of knowledge to DWP to improve the roll-out of Universal Credit, with our joint NFA/ARCH annual survey into welfare reform.
 - Other services, including housing management in the private rented sector, cross-tenure ASB services, homelessness services, specialist housing for older people, care and support services. Our members also play a role in housing and supporting care leavers and looked after children.

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