

ALN Group Chairs – Role Overview

Chair(s) or Chair & Vice-Chair

It is recommended that 2 people are responsible for chairing the group, either as co-Chairs or as Chair and Vice-Chair. The chairs serve a minimum of 12 months, maximum of 3 years to allow other staff to gain experience of chairing a group. If more than one person wishes to be Chair (and co-chairing is not appropriate), then there should be an anonymous election within the group.

Chairs / Vice Chair responsibilities

These duties can be shared between the 2 Chairs / Chair & Vice-Chair:

- Organise meetings - group members to take it in turns to help organise and host meetings. Organising includes nominating a minute-taker; developing the agenda for the meeting based on suggestions from the group; identifying a suitable date for meetings via a doodle poll; setting up the meeting (online or physical); circulating details of the meeting to the group and distributing summary notes of the meeting to the mailing list.
- Maintain communication with ALN Steering Group via a designated lead partner.
- Lead on formation of annual work plan and annual report to the October meeting of the ALN Board. Templates are provided.
- Liaise with ALN Development Managers for development of staff development events.
- Work with ALN Development Managers to set up then manage a JISC Mail group and development of a Teams site.
- First contact with new group members, extend invitation to meetings.
- Maintain a list of members that attend meetings.
- Discuss and agree with members the set-up of any smaller sub-groups or topic-based strands to lead on specific themes.
- Meet once or twice a year with other ALN Group Chairs (online meeting) to share experience and best practice.

Benefits of Chairing an ALN Group

Chairing an ALN Group offers a valuable professional development opportunity with a range of personal and organisational benefits. Current and former Chairs consistently describe the role in positive terms, emphasising that although they may initially have been unsure about the time commitment, the benefits far outweigh any pressures that may arise.

As a Chair or co-Chair, individuals can expect to gain:

- **Personal and Leadership Development:** The role provides hands-on leadership practice in a supportive, collaborative environment. Chairs develop confidence in facilitating meetings, guiding group direction, and supporting peers.
- **Professional Visibility:** Chairs become more widely connected across Academic Libraries North, helping raise their professional profile and positioning themselves as contributors to sector developments.
- **Collaboration & Networking:** Working closely with colleagues across institutions encourages knowledge-sharing and strengthens regional networks.
- **Strategic Insight:** Chairs gain a deeper understanding of ALN's priorities and how groups contribute to wider sector initiatives, offering an opportunity to influence and contribute to collective goals.
- **Personal Fulfilment:** Many Chairs report feeling energised by shaping group activities and seeing direct impact on practice within the region.

Support Available to Group Chairs

Chairs are well supported throughout their term, both by ALN structures and by their co-Chairs and group members. Insights from ALN's Activities page highlight that co-chairing is encouraged to help keep the workload manageable and to ensure Chairs have a peer sounding board throughout their tenure.

Support available includes:

- **Co-Chairing Model:** Most groups operate with two Co Chairs, making it possible to share responsibilities and provide mutual support. This is a core part of making the role manageable and sustainable.
- **ALN Development Managers:** Chairs work closely with ALN Development Managers for practical support, including help with events, group administration (e.g., JiscMail and Teams setup), and wider coordination across ALN.
- **Peer Network of Chairs:** Chairs meet once or twice each year with other Group Chairs to share best practice, reflections, and challenges—creating a supportive cross-group leadership community.
- **Steering Group members:** Chairs have a designated communication link with the ALN Steering Group, ensuring they are not working in isolation and have access to organisational guidance