

Social Return on Investment

The Westhill and District Men's Shed
Scotland

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Glossary

Attribution	An assessment of how much of the outcomes was caused by the contribution of other organisations or people.
Cost allocation	The allocation of costs or expenditure to activities related to a given programme, product or business.
Deadweight	A measure of the amount of outcome that would have happened even if the activity had not taken place.
Discount rate	The interest rate used to discount future costs and benefits to a present value.
Displacement	An assessment of how much of the outcome has displaced other outcomes.
Distance travelled	The progress that a beneficiary makes towards an outcome (also called ‘intermediate outcomes’).
Drop-off	The deterioration of an outcome over time.
Duration	How long (usually in years) an outcome lasts after the intervention, such as a length of time a participant remains in a new job.
Financial value	The financial surplus generated by an organisation in the course of its activities.
Impact	The difference between the outcomes for participants, taking into account what would have happened anyway, the contribution of others and the length of time the outcomes last.
Impact Map	A table that captures how an activity makes a difference: that is, how it uses its resources to provide activities that then lead to particular outcomes for different stakeholders.

Income	An organisation's financial income from sales, donations, contracts or grants.
Inputs	The contributions made by each stakeholder that are necessary for the activity to happen.
Materiality	Information is material if its omission has the potential to affect the readers' or stakeholders' decisions.
Monetise	To assign a financial value to something.
Net present value	The value in today's currency of money that is expected in the future minus the investment required to generate the activity.
Outcome	The changes resulting from an activity. The main types of change from the perspective of stakeholders are unintended (unexpected) and intended (expected), positive and negative change.
Outputs	A way of describing the activity in relation to each stakeholder's inputs in quantitative terms.
Outcome indicator	Well-defined measure of an outcome.
Payback period	Time in months or years for the value of the impact to exceed the investment.
Proxy	An approximation of value where an exact measure is impossible to obtain.
Scope	The activities, timescale, boundaries and type of SROI analysis.
Sensitivity	Process by which the sensitivity of an SROI model to changes in different variables is assessed.
Social return ratio	Total present value of the impact divided by total investment.
Stakeholders	People, organisations or entities that experience change, whether positive or negative, as a result of the activity that is being analysed.

Executive Summary

This report evaluates the Social Return on Investment (SROI) created by the Westhill District Men's Shed, located in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, for the year October 2013 - October 2014.

A Men's Shed is a community facility beneficial to the health and well-being of local men. On the part of participants (Shedders), getting involved in the workshop and social area provides opportunities for making new friends, conducting creative activity, sharing one's skills and experience, and simply good fun. Improvements noted through participation at the Men's Shed include increased self-esteem, a feeling of usefulness, and renewed vitality.

The evaluation presented here utilises the SROI methodology in order to assess the value created by the Men's Shed for the stakeholders who have an interest in it. Social Return on Investment is a framework for measuring and accounting for a broader concept of value. Determining the value of social outcomes can be difficult because the outcomes are not generally traded and a value may not be readily observable. In SROI, indicators and relevant proxy values are used to value outcomes.

The report provides an explanation of the methodology along with details of all workings and results. Outcomes for the primary stakeholders were as follows;

Outcomes for Shedders (Men who Attend the Shed)

The primary outcome of the Men's Shed for participants has been a reduction in social isolation through an increase in social integration. Experiencing a renewed sense of meaningful belonging, purpose and friendship appear to be derived from time spent with others conducting challenging and enjoyable group activities.

For the purpose of this report, a value has been attributed to the time Shedders spent conducting enjoyable activities with their friends.

Outcomes for Partners and Families

The partners and/or families of participants reported improvements in the quality of their relationships, due to the personal time granted by their partners/husbands attendance at the Men's Shed; such personal time has been recognised as crucial following retirement.

For the purpose of this report, a value has only been attributed to the personal time and not to the improved relationships experienced.

Outcomes for Community Planning Partners

An increase in social connection and engagement significantly reduced the risk of social isolation for some Shedders. This is valuable because men who are active and engaged are less likely to require treatment and medication for conditions associated with isolation. Increased mental well-being and self-esteem for shedders can lead to a reduction in any support they may require from local authority Social Work staff. Furthermore, gaining confidence and learning new skills can lead to shedders entering or re-entering the workplace.

For the purposes of this report, a value has been attributed to the reduction in treatment costs associated to isolation to the National Health Service (NHS).

Outcomes for the Community

Members of the community and local charities benefit from project work performed by the Shedders. In particular, those who would not normally be able to afford or find these services commercially are provided with equivalent services at low cost or for free.

For the purposes of this report, a value has been attributed to the projects conducted for local charities and residents for which there was a charge.

Results

The following table shows the value of the outcomes along with the resulting Social Return of Investment (SROI) for the base case analysis;

Inputs

Westhill Men's Shed	Annual Operating Expenditure	£5000
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Total £5,000

Outcomes that were valued (not all benefits were measured)

Stakeholder	Outcome	Value (£)
Shedders	Shedders made new friends and spent more time with others through group activities	15,841
Partners and families	Family is provided with personal time	10,780
NHS Grampian	Shedders less likely to require treatment for conditions associated with isolation	12,432
Community	Community members who would not normally be able to afford or find Shed's services at commercial rates are provided with equivalent services at low cost	9,791

Total £48,844

SROI 10:1

Sensitivity Analysis

The analysis includes a number of judgments; the sensitivity of the result to these judgments has been tested by performing two more iterations of the calculation to represent both a more conservative case and a more optimistic case.

The sensitivity analysis was conducted by;

- increasing or decreasing the inputs by 10%
- increasing or decreasing proxy values by 10%
- increasing or decreasing deadweight values by 10%

Results were as follows;

- Conservative case - 6.5:1 (£ value return : £ investment ratio)
- Optimistic case - 13.7:1 (£ value return : £ investment ratio)

1: Introduction

1.1: Men's Sheds and the Scottish Men's Sheds Association

Men's Sheds are a novel form of community organisation that, as their rapid development in Australia, England, and Ireland demonstrates, promise to play a substantial role in the communities of the future. It has been extremely encouraging to witness the successful birth of this movement in Scotland at the Westhill and District Men's Shed in Aberdeenshire, and now the time has come to take advantage of this early momentum through spreading the concept far and wide, creating highly visible, and highly valuable, physical and social assets for communities throughout the country. At the forefront of this exciting new movement is the Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA), whose aim is to create an information and support network through which communities can be empowered to understand the difficulties faced by men in contemporary society, most notably social isolation, and provided with the advice and 'tools' they need to confront these through the creation of their own Men's Sheds.

The Scottish Men's Sheds Association and other organisations consulted as part of this development program strongly feel that the changes communities have undergone over the past decades have had an adverse effect on the lives of many men, who no longer have a place where they can meet their peers, develop friendships, and discuss issues of relevance to their lives. Previously, a man's workplace, place of worship, or social club provided an informal network of friendship and support, creating for all concerned a valued sense of community. Shorn of many of these tried and tested forms of social integration, men are increasingly finding themselves isolated and alone, and suffering the often dire consequences of such enforced disengagement.

The Scottish Men's Sheds created through the work of this SMSA development program will seek to address the following commonly observed themes;

- Creating new opportunities for men, in particular older men, those who have most strongly experienced changes to their personal lives and their local communities, to reengage with their community and find personal satisfaction in later life.
- Providing new opportunities for men to mentor, rediscover and develop their skills through the provision of an environment in which teaching and learning is a natural aspect of interaction, which may in some instances lead to new employment opportunities for under- and unemployed men.
- Promoting awareness of men's health and well-being issues.

- Supporting the re-integration of ex-service personnel into their local communities.

1.2: The Need for Scottish Men's Sheds

Shifting population demographics indicate that men are living longer than ever before. Due to this, social isolation, a condition associated with a variety of negative health outcomes, is becoming increasingly prevalent amongst older men. Whilst the process of ageing does not directly lead to social isolation, the experience of large-scale changes in the individual's personal life do increase the risk. Such changes include;

- Retirement, and the loss of the life-structuring role employment provides for many men.
- The death of a partner or relationship breakdown, and the loss of the life-structuring relationship provided through long-term marriage/partnership.
- Relocation to a new community and the loss of past social networks.
- The onset of disability and the loss of one's physical and cognitive faculties resulting from this.
- The reduction in physical strength and prowess of having to give up a sport or activity.
- The loss of a driver's licence and the shrinking of one's physical (and hence social) world resulting from this.

Other external factors leading to personal social isolation include;

- Age discrimination, and the lessening of safety and opportunities for social engagement this produces.
- Poor physical infrastructure, in particular a lack of accessible transport, which serves to limit the physical (and hence social) world of the individual.

There is consistent evidence to support the relationship between social engagement and good health in later life and likewise, the relationship between social isolation and depression, poor health, and mortality.

1.3: Target Group

The target group for Men's Sheds in general is all men who feel as though a Men's Shed could benefit their lives; this includes retired men, under- and unemployed men, ex-service personnel, shift workers (for example, oil-rig workers), and those recovering from a variety of physical and mental health issues. In terms of the Westhill Men's Shed, the majority of participants are older retired men from the Westhill and District area of Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

1.4: What are Scottish Men's Sheds?

An ideal for Scottish Men's Sheds to strive for can be characterised by four defining features;

1: A fully equipped workshop in which men can work alongside each other on personal or community projects.

2: A comfortable, warm social area in which Sheddors can share stories about their lives and advice concerning issues of relevance to them over a cup of tea or coffee. There is a no alcohol and drugs policy in Men's Sheds.

3: A kitchen area in which men teach each other to prepare and cook healthy enjoyable meals.

4: A storage area for raw materials and the processing of donated tools.

A Men's Shed is a place for;

- Men of all ages and abilities, with spare time on their hands who desire the social integration and feelings of accomplishment that participation can engender.
- Men who want to learn new skills and teach others the skills they have developed throughout their lives.
- Men who want to pursue their hobbies, pastimes and interests and start new ones.
- Men who believe that their local community is something worth maintaining, who value and want to contribute towards it through working on projects for local charities and individuals within their community.
- Men who want to share their life-stories, their memories and their experiences with others and enjoy life more.

Men's Sheds build upon the long-held notion of a man's special relationship with his shed, his place of retreat, by expanding it to the communal level. This is important, because due to the downsizing of their living arrangements in later life, they often lose this space which they can call their own.

Realising, through discussions with local GP's and an analysis of the shifting economy of North-East Scotland that these issues will impact upon more and more local men in the coming years, the organisers of the Westhill Men's Shed worked over a three year period in order to establish the first such site in Scotland. Having successfully negotiated a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) with Aberdeenshire Council for a disused library building, it is now a hugely successful organisation attracting over three thousand visits in the first year alone, from people throughout the region and providing men with a vital resource that contributes towards leading an active, healthy and contented life.

Furthermore, immersion in the social network existing at the Men's Shed also provides access to external sources of information, including other local social activities, as well as health and employment information, which may be of particular importance to under- and unemployed men and ex-service personnel.

1.5: What is Social Return on Investment?

The SROI Network (Nicholls *et al*, 2012:8) describes the social return on investment approach in the following terms;

"Every day our actions and activities create and destroy value; they change the world around us. Although the value we create goes far beyond what can be captured in financial terms, this is, for the most part, the only type of value that is measured and accounted for. As a result, things that can be bought and sold take on a greater significance and many important things get left out. Decisions made like this may not be as good as they could be as they are based on incomplete information about full impacts.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a framework for measuring and accounting for this much broader concept of value; it seeks to reduce inequality and environmental degradation and improve well-being by incorporating social, environmental and economic costs and benefits.

SROI measures change in ways that are relevant to the people or organisations that experience or contribute to it. It tells the story of how change is being created by measuring social, environmental and economic outcomes and uses monetary values to represent them. This enables a ratio of benefits to costs to be calculated. For example, a ratio of 3:1 indicates that an investment of £1 delivers £3 of social value.

SROI is about value, rather than money. Money is simply a common unit and as such is a useful and widely accepted way of conveying value.

In the same way that a business plan contains much more information than the financial projections, SROI is much more than just a number. It is a story about change, on which to base decisions, that includes case studies and qualitative, quantitative and financial information".

The SROI analysis presented in the current report is evaluative in nature, as it assesses the value created retrospectively.

1.5.1: The principles of SROI

The SROI Network (Nicholls *et al*, 2012:9) note that "SROI was developed from social accounting and cost-benefit analysis and is based on seven principles", which are applicable to all such analyses. These principles are;

- Involve stakeholders
- Understand what changes
- Value the things that matter
- Only include what is material
- Do not over-claim
- Be transparent
- Verify the Result

1.5.2 Methodology

Determining the value of social outcomes can be difficult because the outcomes are not generally traded and a value may not be readily observable. Social Return on Investment is an acceptable and recognised methodology for valuing non-financial outcomes.

The methodology is summarised diagrammatically as follows;
 (Source : *Uniting Care Ageing, SROI M Bevan*)



2: Goals and Program Logic

2.1: Program Logic

2.1.1: Social Connection and Engagement

The primary focus of the Scottish Men's Shed Association is tackling social isolation amongst Scottish men through ensuring equal access to the opportunities for increased community development and citizenship that participation in a Men's Shed can offer. To this end, the Scottish Men's Sheds Association has embarked upon an initial five-year development program, through which grass-roots Men's Shed groups are offered guidance and advice on every aspect of developing and managing their own Shed.

The aim of a Men's Shed is to improve men's health and well-being by increasing their social connection and engagement.

2.1.2: Supporting Wellness and Healthy Ageing

Men's Sheds are aimed at engaging mainly with retired older men, as well as ex-service personnel and under- and unemployed men, who have proved difficult to engage in conventional health education and training initiatives. Through the provision of friendship and a sense of belonging derived from involvement in a cooperative, goal-oriented network of peers, Men's Sheds provide the kind of environment in which these men feel secure discussing issues associated with health and wellness.

The requirement for this kind of welcoming and secure social environment is explained with reference to the cultural differences regarding the expectations of men and women's attitudes and behaviours regarding health and well-being. The need to 'be a man', to maintain a private stoicism in the face of pain or emotional suffering, can be tremendously harmful for many men; what they need is an outlet, an environment in which they can share their issues and receive support in a manner that does not contradict their masculine self-conception.

Leading Men's Shed researcher Professor Barry Golding neatly encapsulates the culturally mandated differences between men and women in his famous quote stating that "men don't talk face-to-face, they talk shoulder-to-shoulder", which has been adopted as the motto of the Men's Shed movement. Men's Sheds provide an environment in which this kind of shoulder-to-shoulder interaction can occur.

They are environments in which working on projects is collaborative, and through such collaboration, men come to realise that they can achieve more through working alongside and supporting others, knowing this support will be reciprocated in kind.

The backdrop of the workshop allows for the formation of mutually supportive friendships, a consideration for the other that ultimately extends beyond working alongside other men, to caring for the health and well-being of friends.

In such an environment, where a man cares for and is cared about by his peers, there is no shame in opening up about an upcoming prostate operation, about memory loss or pill regimes; indeed, it is very often the case that men have been desperate to share their worries with others, but they simply have not been provided with the kind of environment in which they feel comfortable doing this. At the Men's Shed, something like a prostate operation becomes much like the refurbishment of an old engine or the construction of a wooden bench, something to be discussed and worked through, a topic through which men can help each other achieve the desired outcome, be it a fully running engine or the easing of concerns regarding one's health.

In addition to the comfort and confidence that comes from talking shoulder-to-shoulder about personal experiences, the Westhill Men's Shed has also organised presentations from health professionals on specific topics, such as;

- Prostate health
- Heart health
- Strokes
- Healthy eating and cooking for one
- Suicide
- Bereavement
- Other targeted health information for men

These sessions are not forced on Shedders, but are provided where there is some consensus that the group would benefit from such a discussion. In effect, informal one-to-one and group discussions in which health and well-being issues are recognised are expanded upon through these presentations. Much like the visit of an expert to discuss the refurbishment of an old steam engine, once the basics had been noted, Shedders desired more in-depth information on the internal mechanics (of the steam engine and of their own bodies), which health professionals were very willing to provide, as they are aware of the difficulties inherent in trying to increase men's health literacy.

Men's Sheds are also aimed at promoting physical activity; for some men, this may be as simple as getting out of the armchair on a daily basis, walking to the bus stop or the Shed or participating in activities whilst at the Shed, which often require quite demanding physical labours, such as lifting objects or twisting to get in about internal mechanisms.

Whilst this activity alone may not be enough to reduce health risk, the significant change in lifestyle that is experienced by some Sheddors as a result of participating at the Men's Shed may well include marked increases in their level and kind of physical activity.

2.1.3: Supporting and Sustaining Independence and Choice

The common theme in all Men's Sheds is the development and retention of self-esteem, a feeling that the individual has a worthwhile purpose in their life, a feeling that they are an important part of something larger than themselves, a feeling simply that their life has meaning. Men often define themselves by their employment and hence retirement (as well as under- and unemployment) can be shattering for their self-conception; through participation at a Men's Shed, a man can continue to say he is an engineer, a joiner, an IT expert, a teacher, or a manager, and enjoy the kind of positive self-conception this allows for.

The environment provided at a Men's Shed does not merely provide a sense of continuity in a man's life, it also offers opportunities to expand upon one's knowledge and skills. Lifelong and life-wide learning has been identified as an important aspect of all Men's Sheds; it occurs through a man's participation in a cooperative network and on the achievement of particular goals within an acceptable learning environment i.e. the Shed. For example, men will learn how to keep tools sharp so others may use them, they will learn how to use machine tools so they can contribute towards a community project and they will learn to prepare and cook healthy tasty food, all through working shoulder-to-shoulder with other men. No matter how advanced or lacking the individual's prior knowledge and skills may be, they will be welcomed as a fellow Shedder and will be offered the opportunity to be a part of this fulfilling environment.

The idea of being a part of something refers to the sense of ownership that shedders take over their Men's Shed. Whilst it is necessary to have a formally defined board of trustees, there are always opportunities for shedders to join it, or to adopt particular roles within the Shed. Each man is offered the opportunity to become a vital cog in the machine, to use the skills they have, or the skills they have learnt, to contribute towards the development and maintenance of the organisation - *Men's Sheds are not places where men are looked after, they are places looked after by men.*

For many Shedders, the Men's Shed also acts as their point of entry into the wider community they live within. Whilst each helps their fellow man through creating and maintaining a social environment they want to be a part of, the Men's Shed as a whole also scales this up to the level of the wider community, by working on community projects, helping out local charities and individuals in need of assistance, particularly those who cannot afford commercial rates. Again, Shedders are imbued with the feeling that they are helping out others, and are directly contributing to the kind of community they want to live in.

Some may even use the Shed as a springboard to participation in other community groups, all the while establishing supportive bonds with others. Whilst 'community' is often a term shrouded in idealism, in a Men's Shed, the practical reality of what the term means can be found and it is simple; men helping their fellow men, providing them with friendship, support and the ability to maintain a healthy and positive self-conception.

Ultimately then, Men's Sheds work within the parameters of our gender-differentiated culture, but refuse to accept the determinative nature of masculinity;

- It is a fact of our culture that many men find it difficult to open up about their health and well-being; *this can be altered through the provision of supportive environments in which health issues are understood as difficulties to be overcome, rather than admissions of weakness.*
- It is a fact of our culture that many men enjoy workshop-based activities; *this can be harnessed for the good of the community.*

The Men's Shed is a targeted intervention designed for men who will benefit from increased social integration, provided that the substance of such integration is in agreement with their self-conception. Social isolation will not be reduced merely by increasing interaction, the interaction must be of a kind that is appealing to men; it must allow them to take ownership over the process, it must allow them to utilise their knowledge and skills and it must allow them to feel that they are making important contributions to the community they live within.

2.2: Logic Model

The following diagram shows the program logic for a Men's Shed;

Table 1

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes		
	Activities	Participation	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
People and Resources Initial and ongoing financial resources Shed management team Buildings Tools and other materials Requests for community projects	Group activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodwork • Metalwork • Model Railway • Model Making • Upholstery • Tea and Coffee Breaks Friendship-based social interaction Conduct of community projects Sharing of workshop/hobby based knowledge and skills Sharing of health info. Being a member of the Shed and sharing in the fundraising, cataloguing and supervising etc.	Men from the local community where the shed is situated and local districts (on average a 20-30 mile radius of the shed)	Enjoyment of spending time with friends and making new ones Engaging in enjoyable workshop-based activities Mentoring and learning of new skills Getting out of the house	Life is granted positive meaning Social integration is increased Social isolation is decreased	Men are healthier Decrease in future healthcare costs Improvements in familial relationships Creation and maintenance of a vibrant local community that values the contributions Shedders make

2.3: Research Evidence

2.3.1: Population Ageing

Like the rest of the Western world, the population structure of Scotland is experiencing a dramatic shift that will, in the coming years, have profound consequences for the country; a century ago, the 1911 census found the population of approximately 4,760,000 to contain 105,000 men aged over 65, amounting to 2.2% of the population. By the 2011 census, the population had risen to approximately 5,295,000, of which 385,000, or 7.3% of the population, were men aged over 65 (National Records of Scotland, 2013). **The main reason for this shift is the increase in average life expectancy, with men born around 2010 expected to live for 76.1 years, seven years longer than men born around 1981 (MacKenzie, 2012).** Whilst men living longer may appear to be a triumph, unfortunately there are certain understandings of this changing population structure that are extremely negative, stoking the fear that older men and women will become an unmanageable burden on the resources of societies (Bytheway, 1995; Cruikshank, 2013; Davidson, 2011; Mullan, 2000).

Whilst population ageing undoubtedly presents significant challenges for both individuals, communities, and national governments, we believe that it should ultimately be understood as proof-positive of societal progression (Cruikshank, 2013), as it provides a relatively objective means of judging the success of long-term improvements in healthcare facilities and practices, in tackling poverty and destitution and altering unhealthy lifestyles. The Scottish Men's Sheds Association believes in the promotion of a positive understanding of all older men, which recognises both the difficulties they can experience due to typical lifestyle changes brought about by ageing and the substantial contribution they can continue to make to their communities. Men's Sheds provide a practical, and as shall be demonstrated, highly cost-effective means of addressing both these points.

2.3.2: Social Isolation

Considering firstly the difficulties experienced by older men, the decline of men's social networks following retirement (Thompson, 1994; see also, Bolton, 2012) significantly increases the risk of social isolation, a term referring to the objective lack of social contact engaged in by the individual (de Jong Gierveld & Havens, 2004). Social isolation is a major problem facing older men in the UK; although there are no figures available for Scotland, Beach and Bamford (2014) estimate that 1.2 million men (14%) over the age of 50 in England experience a moderate to high degree of social isolation, whilst around 3 million (34%), a third of the population, experience slight social isolation.

Social isolation has been demonstrated to increase the risk factor for a variety of detrimental health conditions, including hypertension, coronary disease, and stroke (Tomaka *et al*, 2006), as well as dementia (Fratiglioni *et al*, 2000), and the onset of disability (Lund *et al*, 2010) and depression (Hawthorne, 2008). To give an overall sense of the dangers posed by social isolation, a recent meta-review of 148 studies conducted over the last century into the relationship between social relationships and mortality demonstrated that "individuals with adequate social relationships have a 50% greater likelihood of survival compared to those with poor or insufficient social relationships" (Holt-Lunstad *et al*, 2010:14). These researchers found this risk factor to equate with other well-known mortality risks, such as smoking and obesity; furthermore, social isolation has been demonstrated to lead to an increased risk of engaging in other unhealthy behaviours, further increasing the mortality risk (Shankar *et al*, 2011), as well as these individual's use of health and social services (Pitkala *et al*, 2009).

In addressing this issue, current research has tended to advocate regular social engagements, including voluntary work, pen-pal networks, adult education classes and telephone support groups (Adams *et al*, 2004; Andersson, 1998; Forbes, 1996; Nutbeam, 1998), with group based interventions offering the greatest scope for improvements in health and well-being (Cattan *et al*, 2005; Dickens *et al*, 2011). However, many men are reluctant to engage with such services which are perceived as female-dominated (Davidson, 2013) spaces of passive, non-productive activity, a perception at odds with masculine conceptions of structured and productive use of time (Whitehead, 2002); as Milligan and colleagues (2013:47-48) put it, "interventions for older men need to appeal to their interests and that involves working with conceptions of masculinity by providing physical activities that are appropriate for the abilities of older men". This evidence suggests a need for structured male-oriented social activities that men will willingly engage with, activities in which they are actively involved, rather than passively 'looked after' and in which

they are offered the opportunity to be involved in decision-making (Cattan *et al*, 2005; Greaves & Farbus, 2006), both of which are provided for in a Men's Shed.

2.3.3: Benefits of Men's Sheds

The Men's Shed movement is built on a long-standing cultural foundation, that of men spending time in their hideaways, tinkering, building, creating things that have long interested many men (Thomson, 2007). The 'movement' originated and rapidly spread in Australia, to the point where there was estimated to be over 600 Men's Sheds operating at the beginning of 2012 (Wilson & Cordier, 2013). A similarly rapid expansion can be witnessed in the UK case, where Milligan and colleagues (2012) suggest there are over 80 Men's Sheds.

The vast majority of Men's Sheds are designed as spaces in which all older men, regardless of age (whether 'young old' or 'old old') or prior social status, can come together with the explicit purpose of conducting hands-on craft, wood and mechanical work through utilising the workshop area and the tools contained within (Ballinger *et al*, 2009).

Australian Men's Sheds have been consistently demonstrated (Misan *et al*, 2008) to provide a new, structured yet non-hierarchical form of goal-directed and casual engagement for men used to paid employment and the social networks these naturally provide (Ormsby *et al*, 2010); whilst research is in its infancy in the UK, the findings of Milligan and colleagues (2012) and Healthbox CIC (2012) provide encouraging signs that the Men's Shed model and the benefits it provides has been successfully transferred (the fieldwork utilised in the current project also indicates the value of the Westhill Men's Shed in the lives of participants). As to these benefits, participation has been found to grant older men a renewed sense of purpose, pride, increased confidence and community membership, opportunities to discuss and learn about health issues in a comfortable setting, as well as access to the means to carry on utilising the skills gained from employment in productive industries and the opportunity to learn new skills in a welcoming informal environment (Ballinger *et al*, 2009; Fildes *et al*, 2010; Golding *et al*, 2007, 2008; Graves, 2001; Milligan *et al*, 2013; Misan *et al*, 2008; Misan & Sergeant, 2009).

Australian Men's Sheds have also been identified as an important means of tackling 'underfoot syndrome' (Golding *et al*, 2007), the undesirable tension that can be produced when couples suddenly find themselves spending a greater amount of time together following retirement. Within the marital relationship, the sudden extra presence of the husband who can no longer structure his daily life around employment, can lead to their wife feeling 'smothered' (Price, 2003). Men's Sheds allow for both husband and wife to spend some time away from each other, pursuing their own interests and ultimately can contribute to marital harmony, lower divorce rates and living together in their home for longer.

These benefits function as pull factors for men seeking a sense of continuity in their lives (Atchley, 1989); they are provided with a structure to their days and weeks that may be lacking after retirement and a sense of belonging to an organisation they value. In terms of confronting social isolation, it can be said that Men's Sheds function as 'primary prevention' services, with a focus on "maintaining independence and good health and promoting well-being" (Windle *et al*, 2011:2), as opposed to the more costly method of treating it once it has been allowed to develop; this is in keeping with the Scottish Government's focus on early intervention and a preventative approach to health and well-being (Christie Commission, 2011). Social integration in Men's Sheds is achieved through the provision of an environment in which men want to be involved in, an environment in which they can continue to be productive through the conduct of personal and community projects, working alongside and making friends with like-minded men.

Such like-mindedness is important, for as Cattan and colleagues (2005) recognise, the similarities between volunteers and participants in services can increase the success of interventions. Based on the PhD fieldwork conducted at the Westhill Men's Shed, it can even be said that this requirement is pushed further, as the distinction between who is running the service, and who is benefiting from it, is blurred. At the Westhill Men's Shed, everyone has a say in the running of the organisation, everyone contributes to its success and hence everyone can be said to be a volunteer; the ability to exercise a degree of 'ownership' and help out other local men experiencing difficulties is a further attractive feature of the organisation for many participants.

2.3.4: Adaptability of Men's Sheds

The value of Men's Sheds in tackling the issue of social isolation lies in their adaptability; whilst all provide a social and/or workshop environment attractive to men, research conducted in Australia demonstrates that they can adapt to a variety of local situations (Hayes & Williamson: 2007). In each instance, the needs of the local community combine with different evolutionary processes at each site to produce a unique space in each case, for example in the case of Westhill, the Business Plan states that;

"The Westhill Men's Shed had its origin as a result of community engagements held in 2009 to draft the Garioch Community Plan 2010/14. The lack of social interaction for retired men, in particular, was initially raised at the 'With Inclusion in Mind' events. It became apparent that various interest groups shared a common concern over the lack of activities for older men and the resulting deterioration in their health and well-being.

Men were becoming withdrawn from their community, some were not getting out of their houses, had little social contact and in turn were becoming hard to reach and hard to motivate.

At the same time as the community engagements were being carried out, the NHS Area Manager advised that concern had been raised by the local GPs that there was an increasing number of recently retired men with mental well-being issues in the Westhill area. This was attributed to oil workers who due to their working patterns were not able to form the social networks that would continue to support them in retirement. Reports were also received [from the Citizen's Advice Bureau] of increasing numbers of marital breakdowns in the recently retired age bracket".

In the case of Westhill, the common lack of productive activities for older men, combined with the restructuring of the local economy towards oil and gas production and services and instances of marital breakdown, produced the need for a positive new social space for men and the Men's Shed analysed in the current report provided this.

In other locations throughout Scotland, the general issue of social isolation is likely to manifest in various locally-specific fashions, thus influencing the evolution and focus of the Men's Shed in each case.

2.3.5: Conclusion

The common factor with all Men's Sheds is the ability of these organisations to bring men together, to allow for the realisation in practice of their need for continued social integration following retirement or during the experience of under- or unemployment. Admittedly, it is true that Men's Sheds will not suit the needs or desires of all men, and this is to be expected in light of their diversity. Nevertheless, as the current research literature seems to make clear, these organisations have located and filled a need for many men in Australia, New Zealand, England and especially in the case of Ireland, younger men and the same can be expected in the relatively similar Scottish context, provided their grassroots development is supported through a grassroots 'organic, bottom up' approach, rather than a 'timescale, top down' one by the relevant authorities.

The worldwide Men's Shed movement, the Scottish Men's Sheds Association and the authors of this report believe that with the provision of open and welcoming spaces which, through the activities and company of like-minded others on offer, are attractive to men, their continued desire to lead a productive and communally-beneficial life can be harnessed.

A Men's Shed is such an open and welcoming space and it can offer immense value not only to the individual, through increasing their social integration in an enjoyable fashion but also for their family, who are afforded the important personal time that can keep a relationship strong, health services, for whom the cost of treating social isolation is lessened and the local community as well, through the provision of high-quality and relatively low-cost work. It is this value which the current report attempts to present in monetary terms.

3: Establishing Scope and Identifying Stakeholders

3.1 Establish Scope

The purpose of this SROI analysis is to;

- 1) Evaluate the social return created by the Westhill Men's Shed.
- 2) Provide Men's Sheds with evidence to support future funding applications.
- 3) Provide Community Planning Partners with a management tool to use when considering community asset transfers and applying community benefit formulae.
- 4) Provide the Scottish Government and other funding streams with evidence when considering the future development of Men's Sheds with the Scottish Men's Sheds Association across Scotland.

The report is based on the year October 2013 - October 2014

3.2 Identify Stakeholders

Stakeholders are defined as people or organisations with an interest in the Men's Shed, or those that experience change, whether positive or negative, as a result of the Men's Shed.

The following tables identify stakeholders included and excluded from the evaluation, along with the reasons for doing so;

Table 2

Key Stakeholder	Reason for Inclusion
Shedders	The activity seeks to achieve outcomes for these stakeholders
Partners and Families	Improvements in the wellbeing of Shedders could have a significant impact on their family and relatives
NHS	The program logic for this activity identifies outcomes which are likely to reduce government health service costs
Members of the Community	Community members and local charities benefit from project work performed by Shedders

Table 3

Key Stakeholder	Reason for Exclusion
Men who visit the Men's Shed but decide not to continue attending	Excluded as there was no evidence to indicate this occurred during the year
Local Authority	Number of shedders who have dispensed with the services of a support worker whilst attending the Men's Shed deemed too low to evaluate. Although the Men's Shed is utilised by Social Work services including mental health, substance misuse, and criminal justice for referring their clients to, the men enter the Men's Shed anonymously and therefore the numbers involved are unknown

3.3: Deciding How to Involve Stakeholders

The following table sets out the method used to engage each stakeholder;

Table 4

Stakeholder	Method of Involvement	Reason
Shedders	Signing-in book Questionnaire	To assess how often each Shedder attends and for duration of sessions The Shedders were given the opportunity to express their views through a specific questionnaire to maintain confidentiality (Appendix 4)
Partners and Families	Questionnaire	The Shedders were asked specific questions about what had changed for their partners and families
Community Planning Partners	Data input	GPs reporting increasing low level mental health issues in recently retired men in Westhill. Community Learning and Development (CLD) workers showing a nil or very low engagement in CLD services by males within the Community Centre Adult Learning program
Members of the Community/ local charities	Record of projects completed	To measure hours of productive work

4: The Impact Map

The Impact Map, detailing the primary stakeholders (Stages 1-3), can be viewed in Appendix 2.

4.1: Inputs

The Westhill and District Men's Shed was initially established through funding from the local authority, NHS, Age Scotland, several other grant providers, and the fundraising efforts of the shedders themselves. No recurrent funding is received from external parties to cover operating costs and for the period of this report, October 2013 - October 2014, Shedders raised funding through the successful application for grants for specific projects, the conduct of commissioned work for local charities and members of the local community, raffles and other local fundraising efforts.

Material inputs have been identified as follows;

Land and Buildings - The Men's Shed is based in a former single story Council Library which was being used for storage. It was taken on a five year lease through a Community Asset Transfer at a cost of £100 per year. The Shed is approximately 200m² in size, and comprises a workshop, a hobby and social area, three toilets, a small kitchen, and a storage area.

General Operating Expenses - Electricity, equipment, repairs, maintenance and insurance etc. The minimum annual cost is £5,000. If materials for projects and other additional requirements are included the expenses would be in the region of £8,000 per year.

4.2: Valuing Inputs

General operating expenses have been valued using the annual budget of the Men's Shed (£5,000).

Land and Buildings have been based on a commercial valuation by the Property Section of Aberdeenshire Council of the premises of £18,000 per annum. When community benefit was taken into consideration this reduced to £100 per annum.

It is worth noting that inputs are low as the Men's Shed is staffed entirely by volunteers.

4.3: Inputs Not Valued

The time contribution given by Sheddors has not been valued as an input. This is considered to be appropriate as it is a generally accepted convention of the SROI methodology.

The time contribution involved in the initial establishment of the Men's Shed by the Garioch Community Planning Officer, Chief Officer (Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action), and Westhill Community Learning and Development Worker (latterly the Aberdeenshire Men's Shed Development Worker) was not included in the evaluation as it took place prior to the reporting period.

No input value has been attributed to the equipment (machinery and tools) or materials used within the workshop. This is because the majority of the equipment used has either been gifted or purchased over time from a variety of grants or donations. It has been excluded as an input as the diminution in value of the equipment during the year is considered negligible. Anecdotally, we understand that some gifted equipment ends up in better condition after being cleaned and serviced in the Shed.

4.4 Outputs

The outputs from the Men's Shed include;

- Group activities (woodwork, metal work, engineering, craft work).
- Community projects (such as special learning toys made for SensationALL, a local children's learning disability charity, wooden benches for schools and community use, and repairs to items of equipment and furniture).
- Informal information and discussion between Sheddors.

4.4.1: Quantification of Outputs

The Men's Shed is open 3 days per week throughout the year.

During October 2013 - October 2014;

- 6,828 hours of time was spent at the shed doing group activities, including 2,486 hours of work on community projects.

- A total of 32 jobs were completed for the community.

5: Evidencing and Valuing Outcomes

5.1: Developing Outcome Indicators

In order to gather data on the impact of the Men's Shed on participant's lives, the findings of a sociology PhD student from the University of Aberdeen who had spent 18 months (over 1,000 hours) conducting an ethnographic study at the Men's Shed has been utilised. The researcher attended practically every session during this timeframe, working alongside the management team and shedders, chatting to both groups about their concerns, both hearing about and observing the positive impact the Men's Shed was having upon their lives. It was therefore an extremely wide-ranging qualitative study, in which the researcher came to understand all aspects of the Men's Shed through the development of friendly relationships with members of the management team and participants. When the term 'PhD fieldwork' is utilised below, this wide-ranging scope of the research should be borne in mind.

During his fieldwork, the researcher also conducted a survey gathering basic demographic and Shed-use information, which was completed by 34 shedders, who acted as the sample utilised in this document. This can be viewed in Appendix 4.

Information from both of these elements of the research are utilised in the current exercise to discover and assess the outcomes generated by an open and fully running Men's Shed (measured in monetary terms) over the course of one year (October 2013 to October 2014). The following outcomes were identified;

5.1.1: Shedders

Table 5

Stakeholders	Outcomes (What Changes)
<i>Who does the Men's Shed have an effect upon?</i>	<i>Description</i>
Shedders	Shedders made new friends and spent more time with others conducting enjoyable group activities
	Shedders managed their health and symptoms better and therefore have a reduced risk of future problems
	Activity and exercise made Shedders fitter

The main outcome identified by shedders is that they made new friends and spent more time with others conducting activities they considered to be enjoyable, which can be labelled as an increase in social integration (and therefore a decrease in social isolation). They reported, in keeping with the existing literature on Men's Sheds;

- A greater sense of involvement in the community
- Great enjoyment through solving problems alongside their friends
- Feeling a great sense of accomplishment through playing their part in the development and maintenance of the Men's Shed
- Enjoying teaching others their skills and in turn being taught the skills of others

The indicator used to measure increasing social integration is time spent with friends conducting enjoyable group activities. This is an objective measure that can be determined by assessing the sign-in sheets at the Men's Shed and is supported by the subjective indicators reported by the Shedders themselves in relation to their internal experience and the new avenues the Men's Shed had opened in their lives.

Discussions with Shedders and evidence from the survey indicated that they place a low value on being fitter or on managing their health and symptoms better and therefore indicators were not developed to validate or measure these outcomes.

5.1.2: Family and Relatives

Informal discussions were held with family members and relatives of Shedders in order to ascertain the changes they had experienced as a result of the Shedders attendance at the Men's Shed. The fieldwork identified nine shedders who reported experiencing 'underfoot syndrome' (Golding *et al*, 2007), the increased risk of tension produced between men and women living together when they begin spending a far greater amount of time together following retirement. These nine shedders stated that their involvement at the Men's Shed had granted their partners valuable personal time.

Table 6

Stakeholders	Outcomes (What Changes)
<i>Who does the Men's Shed have an effect upon?</i>	<i>Description</i>
Family and Relatives	Family and/or relatives were provided with personal time

The indicator of family respite time is the number of visits to the Shed by Sheddors who identified that their family and/or relatives benefit from personal time.

5.1.3: National Health Services

Throughout the course of the fieldwork, the Men's Shed was visited by several government and health officials who were keen to understand the potential physical and mental health benefits being generated. They were told that the Men's Shed held regular formal discussions on men's health issues, including prostate cancer, strokes, heart health, Alzheimer's disease, depression and suicide, as well as providing a space in which men felt secure about opening up about any health issues they may be facing.

Table 7

Stakeholders	Outcomes (What Changes)
<i>Who does the Men's Shed have an effect upon?</i>	<i>Description</i>
National Health Services	Reduction in the cost of treatment for various physical health conditions
	Sheddors less likely to require treatment for conditions associated with social isolation

Whilst we suspect that the Men's Shed has had a positive effect upon the physical health of participants, the fieldwork identified that this was not considered to be a particularly relevant aspect of their involvement. Furthermore, it was not possible to identify or measure a link between the Men's Shed and any reduction in healthcare costs, and therefore this outcome was not included in the final analysis.

However, Sheddors did state that they highly valued the increased social integration offered by participation at the Men's Shed, which they understood in terms of being involved in the creation and maintenance of a new element of their local community specifically focused on what they considered to be enjoyable activities. Therefore in relation to the reduction in social isolation, the indicator is time spent with friends conducting enjoyable activities.

5.1.4: Members of the Community

During the fieldwork, interactions with a number of charitable groups and members of the local community who had received services from the Men's Shed were observed, which allowed for an understanding of what changes had occurred. Services provided to these groups and individuals included;

- The construction of a wooden time-capsule to be kept in the local library
- The construction of wooden shelving for a local primary school
- The construction of wooden planters for a local resident
- The repair of various gardening implements for local residents
- The clearance of garages for local residents

Table 8

Stakeholders	Outcomes (What Changes)
<i>Who does the Men's Shed have an effect upon?</i>	<i>Description</i>
Members of the Community	Local charities and members of the community received high-quality services that they would otherwise not have been able to source or afford

The indicator of this outcome is time spent by Shedders working on projects for local charities or members of the community.

5.1.5: Additional Stakeholders

There were several other stakeholders involved in the Men's Shed over the course of the year, including community planning partners, Aberdeenshire Council, from whom the Men's Shed is leasing a former library building, Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action and local authority staff, and a variety of funding bodies who provided financial support to the Men's Shed (see Appendix 1).

These stakeholders are noted merely for the purposes of completion; the outcomes they hoped to achieve through the support they provided to the Men's Shed are the same as those that have been achieved.

5.1.6: Unintended or Negative Change

In discussions with all stakeholders throughout the fieldwork, all changes were considered (intended, unintended, positive and negative).

The only negative change that stakeholders considered possible was a scenario in which men who visited the Men's Shed found that the activities and company on offer were not to their liking and decide not to continue attending. It was thought that these men may potentially feel more isolated as a result of their rejection of the Men's Shed.

Table 9

Stakeholders	Outcomes (What Changes)
<i>Who does the Men's Shed have an effect upon?</i>	<i>Description</i>
Men who visit the Men's Shed but decide not to continue attending	Men left feeling more isolated

Unfortunately, there were no measures in place to monitor the outcomes for potential Sheddors who decide not to continue attending the Men's Shed, and therefore there is no evidence to indicate whether or not they were left feeling more isolated. As potential new Sheddors typically did not give their contact details until they decided to continue attending, there was no possible means of gathering this data.

5.1.7: Outcome Included and Excluded

The following Table 10 provides a summary of the outcome information contained in Tables 5 to 9. It is an audit trail to show all the outcomes identified through the stakeholder engagement process along with the reasons why certain outcomes were not measured as part of the impact map.

Table 10

Stakeholders	Outcomes (What Changes)	Included/Excluded
<i>Who does the Men's Shed have an effect upon?</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Reason for inclusion or exclusion</i>
Shedders	Shedders made new friends and spent more time with others conducting enjoyable group activities	Included as Shedders indicated that they valued increasing their social integration
	Shedders managed their health and symptoms better and therefore have a reduced risk of future problems	Excluded as Shedders placed little value on this outcome
	Activity and exercise made Shedders fitter	Excluded as Shedders placed little value on this outcome
Family and Relatives	Family and/or relatives were provided with personal time	Included as Shedders and family and relatives described this as an important outcome
National Health Services	Reduction in the cost of treatment for various physical health conditions	Excluded as there was little evidence to suggest this outcome occurred
	Shedders less likely to require treatment for conditions associated with social isolation	Included because this is a significant outcome for the stakeholder
Members of the Community	Local charities and members of the community received high-quality services that they would otherwise not have been able to source or afford	Included because this is a significant outcome for the stakeholder
Men who visit the Men's Shed but decide not to continue attending	Men left feeling more isolated	Excluded as there was no evidence to indicate this occurred during the year

5.2: Collecting Outcome Data

The following methods were chosen to collect outcome data;

Table 11

Stakeholder	Method
Shedders	<p>Sign-in sheets identified the total number of hours spent at the Men's Shed by Shedders over the course of the year</p> <p>PhD fieldwork identified a suitable proxy for the value shedders granted to the Men's Shed</p>
Family and Relatives	<p>Sign-in sheets identified the total number of hours spent at the Men's Shed by Shedders whose family and/or relatives benefited from personal time</p> <p>PhD fieldwork identified those shedders whose family and/or relatives benefited from personal time</p>
National Health Services	<p>The survey and PhD fieldwork combined to identify Shedders gaining increased social integration</p>
Members of the Community	<p>Sign-in sheets identified the total number of hours spent by Shedders working on community projects</p> <p>Project records and PhD fieldwork combined to identify the value of projects conducted for local charitable organisations and members of the local community</p>

The wide-ranging scope of the PhD fieldwork is discussed above. Daily sign-in sheets at the Men's Shed recorded the time and purpose of each Shedders visit, project records recorded information about community projects and the survey utilised is in Appendix 4.

5.3: Valuing Outcomes

The following valuation methods have been utilised;

Table 12

Stakeholder	Valuation Method
Shedders	Proxy used for the value of enjoyable social activities
Family and Relatives	Proxy used for the value of personal time
National Health Services	Proxy used for the cost of treating social isolation
Members of the Community	Proxy used for valuing time spent on community projects

The following Table identifies each outcome indicator along with the source from which the information was gathered;

Table 13

The Outcomes (What Changes)		
<i>Description</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Source</i>
<i>How is the change described?</i>	<i>How is the change measured?</i>	<i>Where did the information come from?</i>
Shedders made new friends and spent more time with others conducting enjoyable group activities	Hours spent with friends conducting enjoyable group activities	Shedders
Family and/or relatives were provided with personal time	Hours of additional personal time gained by family and/or relatives of Shedders	Family and/or relatives
Shedders less likely to require treatment for conditions associated with social isolation	Increased social integration (the number of Shedders who spent additional hours with friends conducting enjoyable group activities)	Shedders
Local charities and members of the community received high-quality services that they would otherwise not have been able to source or afford	Number of hours spent by Shedders working on community projects	Shedders and the management team

5.3.1: Sheddors

Throughout the course of the fieldwork, the researcher came to learn about many aspects of participant's lives; of interest in this section is the value, measured in monetary terms, of the typical social activities they reported engaging in. These were regular and accessible activities they enjoyed taking part in, both for the actual activity and for the social interaction participation allowed for, the same basic reasoning behind their attendance at the Men's Shed (though participants did go on holidays and engage in other 'one-off' activities that they valued, these have not been included in the analysis, because they were not typical activities they engaged in on a weekly basis).

In order to calculate the value of the Men's Shed to participant's lives, an average was taken of the cost of other enjoyable social activities they reported attending on a regular basis in the local area. The average cost was utilised in order to include the entire variety of social activities engaged in and is worked out in the Table 14.

Table 14

Activity	Cost per Hour (£)
Swimming Session	1.80
Tennis Session	8.40
Squash Session	6.50
Bowling Session	1.25
Golf (1 round)	6.60
Gym Session	4.75
Pub Visit	3.50
Coffee Shop Visit	2.50
Cultural Activities (Plays, Cinema, Concerts)	2.60
Football Tickets (1 Match)	8.50
Neutral Downtime	0.00
Average Cost per Hour (£)	4.64

The average cost per hour of enjoyable social activities in the local area was £4.64 and therefore it can be said that this figure represents the value of an hour's worth of what Sheddors considered

to be enjoyable social activity and hence can be utilised as a proxy to measure the value per hour of attending the Men's Shed.

In actuality, this figure may be an underestimation, given that several Sheddors reported valuing the Men's Shed higher than other activities they engaged in (this is dealt with in the sensitivity analysis, in which the value of this proxy is increased by 10%).

Multiplied by the total amount of hours spent at the Men's Shed during the year (6,828, a figure derived from a study of the daily sign-in sheets), this results in the following calculation;

$$\begin{aligned} &4.64 \times 6,828 \\ &= 31,682 \end{aligned}$$

The total value of the Shed to the 'Sheddors' stakeholder is £31,682 per year.

5.3.2: Family and Relatives

Through discussions about this issue with both Sheddors and their family, nine Sheddors living with their wife or partner identified the experience of 'underfoot syndrome' (Golding *et al*, 2007), and stressed the value of the Men's Shed in relieving this through the provision of personal time.

In valuing personal time, the UK National Minimum Wage (£7) was agreed to be a simple and appropriate proxy.

The nine Sheddors identified spent on average 30 hours per week at the Shed, or 10 hours per session. This was multiplied by 154, the number of Shed sessions per year, and then multiplied by 7, the proxy figure. The calculation was therefore as follows;

$$\begin{aligned} &(10 \times 154) \times 7 \\ &= 10,780 \end{aligned}$$

The total value of the Shed to the 'family and relatives' stakeholder is £10,780 per year.

5.3.3: National Health Services

The savings in healthcare costs to the National Health Service was discussed with a representative of Aberdeenshire Council. The Council functions as a suitable representative of the National Health Service, and ultimately, the government, as they are tasked with promoting and understanding programs that target social isolation, and have a good working knowledge of the Westhill Men's Shed.

It was agreed that there were 2 types of change that the Scottish Government was interested in when it came to Scottish Men's Sheds;

- A general improvement in the social connection and engagement of ageing men in the community
- A significant improvement to those men that are highly isolated

In order to establish a proxy regarding the cost of social isolation a review of the relevant literature was conducted. Unfortunately, the literature on the economic costs of social isolation is currently sparse, though a frequently utilised approximation (by Altogether Better, the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services and the Campaign to End Loneliness, as well as being widely reported in the media and noted in academic textbooks) is that of researcher Holt-Lunstad and colleagues, who, based on a 2010 meta-review of studies into loneliness, equated the health impact of loneliness to be equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes per day.

The cost of smoking to the NHS is well-documented; according to the recent findings of Allender and colleagues (2009), it amounts to £5.17 billion per year. Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) - 2014, report that there were approximately 10 million smokers in the UK in 2012, smoking on average 11.5 cigarettes per day, hence in order to calculate the cost per smoker per year, the following calculation is performed;

$$\begin{aligned} & 5.17\text{bn}/10\text{m} \\ & = 517 \end{aligned}$$

To account for the figure of 15 provided by Holt-Lunstad and colleagues (2010), it is divided by 11.5, yielding a figure of 1.3, meaning that social isolation is 1.3 times more harmful than smoking 11.5 cigarettes a day;

$$1.3 \times 517 = 672$$

The proxy for social isolation thus amounts to £672.

All 34 Sheddors increased their time spent with friends through participating at the Men's Shed and all reported that they had made new friends. Where Sheddors have increased their time with friends by more than 2 hours per week, they will have reduced their risk of social isolation (31 Sheddors fall under this category; 3 had increased their time spent with friends, but they spent less than 2 hours per week at the Men's Shed). In these instances, the proxy is utilised once to represent the likely reduced costs associated with treating social isolation.

In addition, where Shedders have increased their time with friends by more than 8 hours per week, they will have significantly reduced their risk of social isolation (6 Shedders fall under this category). In these cases, it is considered appropriate to attribute the proxy again as a measure of the additional savings associated with this marked change.

In calculating the value of the change to the National Health Services stakeholder group, the proxy was applied 31 times to represent the general reduction in potential social isolation of the 31 Shedders (an increase of at least 2 hours per week). Furthermore, the proxy was applied an additional 6 times to represent the significant reduction in the risk of isolation for 6 Shedders, who increased their time with friends by more than 8 hours per week). The calculation was as follows;

$$(31 + 6) \times 672 \\ = 24,864$$

The total value of the Shed to the 'National Health Service' stakeholder is £24,864 per year.

5.3.4: Members of the Community

Shedders engaged in 32 community projects over the course of the year, both for members of the community and local charities. Unfortunately, incomplete record keeping means that the total cost of these projects for the stakeholder could not be ascertained, though around £2500 seems a reasonable estimate. During the PhD fieldwork, satisfaction with the work carried out was consistently observed, as was the ever-increasing amount of charitable groups and community residents who sought the services of the Men's Shed.

The value of this community work to the stakeholder was calculated by taking the total number of hours spent working on community projects, derived from sign-in sheets at the Men's Shed (2486), reducing it by a quarter, in order to account for the slower pace of work conducted by Shedders and time spent taking tea breaks, chatting or working on their own projects, and then multiplying it by the UK National Minimum Wage (£7 per hour). The calculation was as follows;

$$2486/4 = 621.5$$

$$621.5 \times 3 = 1,865$$

$$1,865 \times 7 = 13,055$$

The total value of the Shed to 'members of the community' stakeholder is £13,055 per year.

6: Establishing the Impact

6.1: Deadweight

Deadweight is a measure of the amount of outcome that would have happened even if the activity had not taken place.

The following framework was used for establishing deadweight.

Table

Table 15

Category	Assigned %
1. This outcome would not be expected to occur without the activity in place	0
2. There would have been minor change without this activity	25%
3. There would have been some change without this activity	50%
4. There would have been significant change without this activity	75%
5. The outcomes would have happened anyway	100%

In discussions with the management team and shedders, the latter stated that they did take part in other activities, but also that their participation at the Men's Shed increased the total amount of time they spent with friends conducting enjoyable activities. Therefore, **Category 2** best describes the deadweight for the **Shedder** stakeholder group.

In discussions with the management team and Shedders, it was stated that the Men's Shed had provided **Family and Relatives** with additional personal time and therefore **Category 1** best describes the deadweight for this stakeholder group.

Considering the **NHS** stakeholder group, **Category 3** best describes the deadweight, as the other activities shedders are known to take part in could conceivably affect their level of social isolation.

For members of the **Community and Local Charities**, **Category 2** was considered to best describe the deadweight, because although they could conceivably have approached other charitable groups with their requests in certain instances, the majority of the projects conducted for this stakeholder group required the specialist skills possessed by the Shedders.

6.2: Displacement

Displacement is an assessment of how much of the outcome has displaced other outcomes. The following framework was used for establishing deadweight.

Table 16

Category	Assigned %
1. The outcomes have not displaced other outcomes	0
2. There would have been minor displacement of other outcomes	25%
3. There would have been some displacement of other outcomes	50%
4. There would have been significant displacement of other outcomes	75%
5. The outcomes completely displace other outcomes	100%

It is unlikely that local builders miss out on paid jobs as a result of the work done for the Community by the Men's Shed. The work is not in direct competition and the scale of the Men's Shed project is small in comparison to local building activity. The displacement for all outcomes has been assessed as **Category 1**.

6.3: Attribution

Attribution is an assessment of how much of the outcome was caused by the contribution of other organisations or people.

The following framework was used for establishing attribution.

Table 17

Category	Assigned %
1. The outcome is completely a result of this activity and no other programs or organisations contributed	0
2. Other organisations and people have some minor role to play in generating the outcome	25%
3. Other organisations and people have a role to play in generating the outcome to some extent	50%
4. Other organisations and people have a significant role to play in generating the outcome	75%
5. The outcome is completely a result of other people or organisations	100%

Our assessment is that there do not appear to be other activities contributing to the changes. All outcomes have been classified as **Category 1**.

6.4: Drop-off

Although it is standard practice to include a calculation of Drop-off in an SROI analysis, it was felt that since the Men's Shed will not be closing in the foreseeable future, this did not need to be included.

7: Calculating the SROI

The final SROI analysis can be viewed in Appendix 3.

7.1: The Base Case

There was no input from relevant stakeholders over the course of the year being analysed, which would produce an SROI of 0:48844.

We realise that Scottish Men's Sheds in the developmental stages will likely receive income from their stakeholders and hence this figure above, although accurate, is unrealistic for those who want to use this document to demonstrate the value of a Men's Shed to possible funders.

In order to generate a more relevant figure with this in mind, the value of inputs is set at £5,000, the running costs of the Westhill Men's Shed for 1 year.

The value of outputs is £48,844.

The SROI is calculated as;

$$\text{SROI} = \frac{\text{Total value created}}{\text{Value of inputs}}$$

$$\text{SROI} = \frac{48,844}{5,000}$$

$$\text{SROI} = \frac{9.8}{1}$$

The SROI is 9.8:1, meaning that for every £1 of input, £9.80 of social value is created.

Rounded off, it can be said that the SROI is 10:1, meaning that for every £1 of input, £10 of social value is created.

7.2: Sensitivity Analysis

The analysis includes a number of judgements and hence it is vital to conduct a sensitivity analysis in order to gauge the degree to which reasonable changes in particular elements of the calculation affect the overall value derived from the Men's Shed.

The sensitivity analysis was conducted by;

- increasing or decreasing the inputs by 10%
- increasing or decreasing proxy values by 10%
- increasing or decreasing deadweight values by 10%

The changes made to the overall SROI figure are noted in the following Table 18.

Table 18

Factor Amended	Increase/Decrease	Amount Added (£)	Amended Amount (£)	SROI (all else remaining the same)
<i>Input</i>	+10%	+500	5500	8.9
<i>Input</i>	-10%	-500	4500	10.9
<i>Shedders Proxy</i>	+10%	+3168.20	34850.20	10.4
<i>Shedders Proxy</i>	-10%	-3168.20	28513.80	9.1
<i>Family and Relatives Proxy</i>	+10%	+1078	11858	10.0
<i>Family and Relatives Proxy</i>	-10%	-1078	9702	9.6
<i>NHS Proxy</i>	+10%	+2486.40	27350.40	10.3
<i>NHS Proxy</i>	-10%	-2486.40	22377.60	9.3
<i>Community Proxy</i>	+10%	+1305.50	14360.50	10.0
<i>Community Proxy</i>	-10%	-1305.50	11749.50	9.5
<i>Shedders Deadweight</i>	+10%	-1584.1	14256.90	9.5
<i>Shedders Deadweight</i>	-10%	+1584.1	17425.10	10.0
<i>Family and Relatives Deadweight</i>	+10%	-1078	9702	9.6
<i>Family and Relatives Deadweight</i>	-10%	+1078	11858	10.0
<i>NHS Deadweight</i>	+10%	-1243.2	11188.80	9.5
<i>NHS Deadweight</i>	-10%	+1243.2	13675.20	10.0
<i>Community Deadweight</i>	+10%	-979.1	8811.90	9.6
<i>Community Deadweight</i>	-10%	+979.1	10770.10	10.0

7.3: Conservative and Optimistic Cases

To show the combined effect of all of the adjustments, a conservative case and an optimistic case were produced.

The conservative case represents all of the adjustments above that decrease the SROI applied at the same time. This gives a total value created of £35,921.50 and increases the value of inputs to £5,500.

$$\text{SROI} = \frac{\text{Total value created}}{\text{Value of inputs}}$$

$$\text{SROI} = \frac{35,921.50}{5,500}$$

$$\text{SROI} = \frac{6.5}{1}$$

The optimistic case represents all of the adjustments above that increase the SROI applied at the same time. This gives a total value created of £61,766.50 and reduces the value of inputs to £4,500.

$$\text{SROI} = \frac{\text{Total value created}}{\text{Value of inputs}}$$

$$\text{SROI} = \frac{61,766.50}{4,500}$$

$$\text{SROI} = \frac{13.7}{1}$$

The results of the sensitivity analysis were therefore;

- Conservative case there is £6.50 of value for every £1 of investment
- Optimistic case there is £13.70 of value for every £1 of investment

The important point to note is that in a Men's Shed with 34 participants, the value generated per year is £48,844. Utilising this basic figure, inputs can easily be altered to reflect the circumstances of particular Men's Shed, for example, doubling the input to £10,000 will result in an SROI of 4.9:1; if this were the case, the conservative case would be 3.6:1, whilst the optimistic case would be 6.2:1.

8: Verifying the Result

The outcomes and proxy valuation methods presented in this report were derived from discussions with each stakeholder group, conducted in the course of observational PhD fieldwork by the researcher.

The outcomes and findings at each stage of the process were communicated directly to the stakeholders who experienced change on an informal basis.

The stakeholders verified;

- The validity of the indicators.
- The outcomes they valued.
- The results of the SROI methodology as presented in this report.

As all the outcomes and their value have been confirmed directly with the stakeholder groups, this is considered verification of the results presented in this report.

The results of this analysis were also discussed with the Scottish Men's Sheds Association, management team and internally with Council staff. These discussions have provided further validation of the nature of outcomes and the numerical results obtained.

9: Conclusion

The rapid growth of the Men's Sheds movement throughout the world is an excellent example of multi-level cooperative action being taken in response to shifting global and local circumstances. National and regional government have worked alongside charities, both large and small and enthusiastic local communities to produce novel and most importantly appealing solutions to address the issues facing men at the turn of the 21st century. Globally, the main issue is demographic change, meaning both that older men comprise a greater percentage of the population, men are living longer than ever before and spending a greater proportion of their life in retirement, whilst still suffering from higher morbidity and dying younger than women.

In order to address this issue, it is vital to recognise the importance many men place in maintaining their gender identity following retirement, the continued conception of self as a productive member of one's community and to channel this desire for activity into positive endeavours, whilst also recognising that health issues can generate specific difficulties for men's self-conceptions. Men's Sheds are an alcohol and drug-free environment offering one of the few healthy indoor alternatives to the pub or the betting shop for all men in contemporary society, irrespective of their age, education, nationality, creed, or colour. They are about harnessing the desire of men to contribute to their community, whilst also allowing them to shed their inhibitions through the provision of a supportive environment in which ill-health, whether physical or mental, is perceived not as shameful, not something to be hidden, but rather a challenge to be confronted with the support of others, who in many cases are experiencing the same problems.

Social isolation is the main point addressed in this report and with good reason; being isolated from one's peers, a particular problem experienced by men following retirement and spending one's days alone, with minimal or no contact with others, can lead to feelings of worthlessness, and ultimately depression, as well as triggering physical health issues. This can manifest locally through increasing divorce rates, as was the case in Westhill, or under- or unemployment amongst men of all ages, from those leaving school to those in their fifties struggling to find employment in our rapidly changing economy (a particular problem in Ireland, which was hit hard by the economic crisis; Irish Men's Sheds, which tend to have a younger membership than those in Australia, have established back-to-work support programs for their members).

Ex-service personnel are also particularly vulnerable to social isolation and although the role of Men's Sheds in reintegrating them back into their communities is still in its infancy in Scotland, the Scottish Men's Sheds Association, in conjunction with Legion Scotland, the Thistle Foundation, SAMH and other third sector organisations, recognise this as an area of great potential and benefit.

The strength of a community, the ability it has to exert positive effects on the health and well-being of individuals living within it, is ultimately based on interaction, on bringing people together to share both their successes and their problems. At their heart, Men's Sheds are about providing a welcoming and supportive space in which this interaction can occur; the benefits they provide will vary based on the location of the Men's Shed (ideally in the heart of a village), and the allowing of men to meet and pursue personal and communally beneficial interests in a location of their choice, namely the Shed.

[An Integrated Approach](#)

In order to establish a vibrant Men's Sheds Movement in Scotland, it is vitally important that an integrated approach, utilising the specific capacities of each of the relevant parties;

Scottish Government

From the Scottish Government, the Scottish Men's Sheds Association needs financial and moral support to implement their cohesive five-year development plan for Scotland. Men's Sheds align with the recent government focus on preventative health interventions and 'resilient' communities, and can function as a financially advantageous means of putting this into practice.

Scottish Councils

From Scottish councils and local authorities, our Men's Sheds need 'peppercorn' or rent-free secure buildings, the actual 'Shed' which members can develop according to their specific concerns. **As this report has demonstrated, the continual national financial benefits and return (in terms of overall value) will far outweigh any short-term financial gains buildings may generate for local authorities.**

Charities/TSI's

From Charities and Third Sector Interfaces (TSI's), Scottish Men's Sheds require guidance, direction, and financial support. The Scottish Men's Sheds Association Charity is being established in order to utilise the current Men's Shed development workers experience in order to provide a tried and tested 'tool kit' and 'face-to-face' guidance which will aid in the establishment of a nationwide Scottish Men's Shed Movement. General national charities, such as Age Scotland and local charities such as Rotary, Lions and Round Table groups, can provide publicity, speaking platforms and financial support for the purchasing of tools, machinery, etc.

Local Communities

From local communities, Men's Sheds require dedication, which has been amply demonstrated in the Aberdeenshire region, where eight new communities are working with the Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action (AVA) Men's Sheds Development worker to establish their Sheds. In Westhill, a dedicated group of men and women sought out funding (and conducted their own fundraising activities), produced a constitution and business plan, established a charity, negotiated a Community Asset Transfer for a council building, conducted promotional work in the community and through the media and now run a successful Men's Shed with an active and communally-engaged membership. Inspired by the success in Westhill, many other communities are now seeking to establish a Men's Shed and it is the purpose of this report to help them achieve this goal.

Pursuing an integrated approach, it is possible to replicate in Scotland the tremendous success of Men's Sheds in Australia, New Zealand, England, Ireland and Westhill, N.E. Scotland and hence to improve the lives of men and their communities throughout the country.

The Outcomes

The valuing exercise conducted in this report has utilised money as a measure of value and from this it has been demonstrated that Men's Sheds can undoubtedly contribute far more than is required for their initial establishment, as is apparent in the outcomes generated.

Outcomes for Shedders (Men who attend the sheds)

The main outcome for Shedders is a reduction in social isolation, with all the subsequent personal benefits this provides. Shedders achieved a sense of belonging and a new sense of purpose derived from time spent with friends conducting enjoyable group activities. The establishment of such friendships granted them opportunities not merely to work alongside others, but also to share and gain support regarding any health concerns they may be having.

Outcomes for Partners and Families

Partners and families were granted increased personal time whilst their husband/partner was at the Men's Shed, a crucial factor in increasing harmony in the home and therefore decreasing the chance of divorce. This can also contribute to living together for longer in ones own home.

Outcomes for Community Planning Partners

An increase in social connection and engagement significantly reduced the risk of social isolation for some Shedders and partially reduced the risk for all Shedders, who are then less likely to require treatment for conditions associated with isolation. An increase in mental well-being and self-esteem for Shedders can lead to a reduction in GP visits, prescribed medications and any support they need from local authority Social Work staff, in keeping with the recent government focus on preventative health solutions.

Outcomes for the Community

Members of the community and local charities benefited from project work conducted by Shedders, who utilised their skills to provide high-quality work for a variety of individuals and groups; in certain instances, shedders provided services otherwise hard to source, whilst in the case of charities, the relatively low cost was beneficial, as they would not have been able to afford commercial rates.

It should be remembered that this exercise is reductive in character, concentrating as it does personal and communal flourishing into a ratio (10:1 for every £1 spent, £10 worth of value is generated). **It should always be recalled what lies behind the number.** The great value of a Men's Shed for the man who thinks twice about suicide, for the wife or partner granted a few hours of peace, for the disabled child provided with handmade wooden toys, for the couple who stay happily married and live at home together longer and ultimately, for the community in which engagement with others, the opportunity to pass on skills and stories, to share in learning and laughs, **a purpose to live and and be 'needed' is restored;** this is the real value of a Men's Shed, a place in which strangers become friends and friends become a community.

Appendix 1: Additional Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Intended/Unintended Changes	Inputs		Outputs	The Outcomes (what changes)
<i>Who do we have an effect on?</i>	<i>What do you think will change for them?</i>	<i>What do they invest?</i>	<i>Value (£)</i>	<i>Summary of activities in numbers</i>	<i>Description</i>
					<i>How would you describe the change?</i>
Community Planning Partners	Achievement of Outcomes (Single Outcome Agreement)	Annual operating expenditure	£0	34 Shedders per week participated in Shed-based group activities during the year	Shedders and family (all outcomes for this stakeholder already considered in primary stakeholders table)
		Administration	£0		
Local Authority Land and Buildings	Re-use of Council building	Former library within school grounds	-£100 (payment for use of building)	Achievement of Outcomes (Single Outcome Agreement)	Use of Council Building
AVA and Local Authority Staff	Development of skills and knowledge, development of a network of Sheds	Time, money	£10 per hour + 20%	£2,080	Achievement of development outcomes
Funding Bodies	Investment of funding to achieve trust objectives	Money	Various grants	£4,000	Achievement of trust objectives

Appendix 2: Impact Map – Primary Stakeholders/Stages 1 - 3

Stage 1		Stage 2			Stage 3								
Stakeholders	Intended/Unintended Changes	Inputs		Outputs	The Outcomes (what changes)								
Who do we have an effect on?	What do you think will change for them?	What do they invest?	Value (£)	Summary of activities in numbers	Description	Indicator	Source	Quantity	Duration	Financial proxy description	Value (£)	Source	Total value (£)
					How would you describe the change?	How would you measure it?	Where did you get the information from?	How much change was there?	How long does it last?	What proxy would you use to value the change?	What is the value of the change?	Where did you get the information from?	
Shedders	Shedders will make new friends and spend more time with others. Shedders will participate in positive therapeutic group activities	Time	£0	Group activities (woodwork, metalwork, model-making) operated on 154 days per year	Shedders made new friends and spent more time with others through conducting enjoyable group activities	Hours spent with friends and as part of enjoyable group activities	Sign-in sheets at the Shed (hours), PhD fieldwork (identification of alternative social activities engaged in by Shedders)	6828 hours	1 year	Valuation exercise identified proxy of the average cost of alternative, enjoyable, social activities engaged in by Shedders in the local area	4.64 per hour	Online search for prices	31,682
Family and Relatives	Personal Time	N/A	£0	Visits to the Shed by Shedders (1.25 per week)	Family is provided with personal time	Hours of personal time	Survey conducted amongst Shedders (hours), PhD fieldwork (those gaining personal time)	1,540 hours	1 year	Valuation exercise identified proxy	7 per hour	UK National Minimum Wage	10,780
National Health Services	Money saved on health service provision	N/A	£0	Time spent socialising by Shedders at risk of, or suffering from, social isolation	Shedders less likely to require treatment for conditions associated with social isolation	Number of Shedders with increased and social participation	Survey conducted amongst Shedders, PhD fieldwork	37	1 year	Cost to the NHS for treating one smoker per year	672 per person per year	Prior research	24,864
Members of the Community	Provision of projects for community members and local charities	Money	+/- £2,500 (incomplete information)	32 community projects	Community members and local charities could not afford these services at commercial rates	Hours of productive work on community projects	Sign-in sheets at the Shed	1,865 hours	1 year	Cost of commercial wages	7 per hour	UK National Minimum Wage	13,055

Appendix 3: Impact Map : Calculation of Social Return/Stages 4 and 5

Stage 1 Duplicate	Stage 2 Duplicate	Stage 4				Stage 5
<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>The Outcomes</i>	<i>Deadweight %</i>	<i>Displacement %</i>	<i>Attribution %</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Calculating Social Return</i>
<i>Groups of people that change as a result of the activity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>What would have happened without the activity?</i>	<i>What outcomes did you displace?</i>	<i>Who else contributed to the change?</i>	<i>Quantity times financial proxy, less, deadweight, displacement, and attribution</i>	<i>Year 1</i>
	<i>How would you describe the change?</i>					
Shedders	Shedders made new friends and spent more time with others through group activities	50%	0%	0%	15,841	£15,841
Family and Relatives	Family is provided with personal time	0%	0%	0%	10,780	£10,780
National Health Services	Shedders less likely to require treatment for conditions associated with social isolation	50%	0%	0%	12,432	£12,432
Members of the Community	Community members and local charities could not afford or find these services at commercial rates	25%	0%	0%	9,791	£9,791
Total					48,844	£48,844

Appendix 4 : Men's Shed User Survey

The Men's Shed would like to ask you to fill in this quick survey indicating some basic details about yourself, how you use the Men's Shed, and your assessment of the impact of the Men's Shed on your life.

This survey is entirely anonymous; please do not write your name anywhere, and if you do not wish to answer any of the questions, please skip to the next one.

User Profile

1. Which age category do you fall within?

<i>Age</i>	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99
<i>Please Tick</i>								

2. What is your marital status?

<i>Status</i>	Married	Partnered	Single	Divorced	Widowed
<i>Please Tick</i>					

3. What is your current employment status?

<i>Employment Status</i>	Employed Full Time	Employed Part Time	Fully Retired
<i>Please Tick</i>			

4. How far, in miles, do you travel to the Men's Shed?

<i>Distance</i>	0-2 Miles	2-5 Miles	5-10 Miles	More than 10 Miles
<i>Please Tick</i>				

Use of the Men's Shed

1. On average, how often do you come to the Men's Shed?

<i>Attendance</i>	Less than Once a Month	Once a Month	Once Every Two Weeks	Once a Week	Twice a Week	More than Twice a Week
<i>Please Tick</i>						

2. On average, how long is your attendance per session?

<i>Time</i>	0 - 1 Hour	1 - 3 Hours	More than 3 Hours
<i>Please Tick</i>			

3. Approximately how long have you been coming to the Men's Shed for?

<i>Time</i>	0 - 6 Months	7 - 12 Months	More than 13 Months
<i>Please Tick</i>			

4. What are your reasons for coming to the Men's Shed? Please tick only your 3 main reasons for coming.

<i>Reason</i>	Personal Projects	Group Projects	Community Projects	Woodworking Projects	Engineering Projects
<i>Please Tick</i>					
<i>Reason</i>	Use Tools not Available at Home	Model Railway	Model Making	Games/Hobbies	Computer Use/Classes
<i>Please Tick</i>					
<i>Reason</i>	Socialising	Health Events	Social Events	Supervision	Other
<i>Please Tick</i>					

If you ticked other, please specify: _____

7. Have you spoken about or recommended the Men's Shed to other men?

Yes	No

8. To what extent would you agree with the following statements? Please tick only one box per question.

'I have learned new skills at the Men's Shed'

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

'I have learned about my health at the Men's Shed'

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

'I have made new friends at the Men's Shed'

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

'I am happy with the variety of projects available at the Men's Shed'

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

'The Men's Shed gives me a chance to use my skills to help others'

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

'I feel respected at the Men's Shed'

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

'The Men's Shed is managed in an open and democratic fashion'

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

'The Men's Shed has improved my life'

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

We are sometimes asked if going to a Men's Shed produces any "real" difference in a man's physical or mental health. Based on your own experience or what you've seen amongst other men, tell us what you think: _____

If there are any further comments you wish to make regarding any aspect of the Men's Shed, please do so here: _____

Thank you for your help with this survey.

Men's Shed User Survey

Results – Jeremy Watt

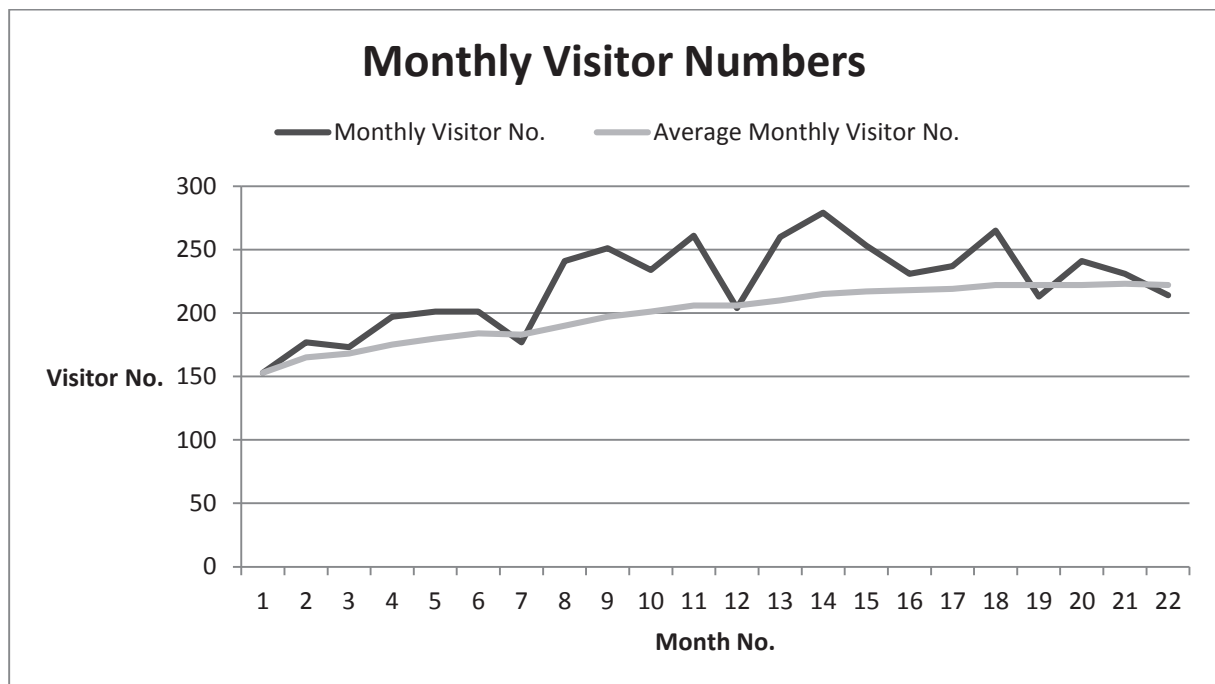
In order to provide a basic quantitative assessment of the Westhill Men's Shed, I conducted a short survey amongst the main participants (n=34) over a 3 week period, from Monday 18th August 2014 to Friday 5th September 2014 (by 'main participants', I refer to those who attended the Men's Shed during this time period; whilst there were a couple of notable omissions, it is unlikely that any of the core group would not attend for three weeks in a row, and therefore it is reasonable to state that the vast majority were granted the opportunity to take the survey). The survey was anonymous, and began by asking for basic demographic information about the respondent, before moving onto their attendance level and purpose for coming to the Men's Shed, and then utilised a seven-level Likert response format (the kind in which answers available are 'strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree') to assess the means by which their attendance had impacted upon their lives, as well as what they think about certain aspects of the Men's Shed. Scattered throughout were written-answer questions designed to elicit additional thoughts on certain survey items.

Demographics

According to information provided in the survey, the Men's Shed has been attended mostly by men between the ages of 60 and 79 (82%). All respondents had been married at some point in their lives, and the majority (82%) remained so, and likewise, the majority (82%) were fully retired. What can be said from this is that the majority of participants at the Men's Shed are retired men in late-middle to early-older age who live with their wives. Only 53% reported living within 0 to 2 miles of the Men's Shed however, whilst 47% lived 2 or more miles away; whilst this does suggest a degree of dedication on the part of those who have to travel to the Men's Shed, respondent 24 did note that "*I wish there were more Sheds so I wouldn't have to travel so far to the Shed or have the option of using various Sheds and the uniqueness of what they could offer*", suggesting that there is a desire for Men's Sheds throughout the Aberdeenshire region.

Attendance and Reasons for Attendance

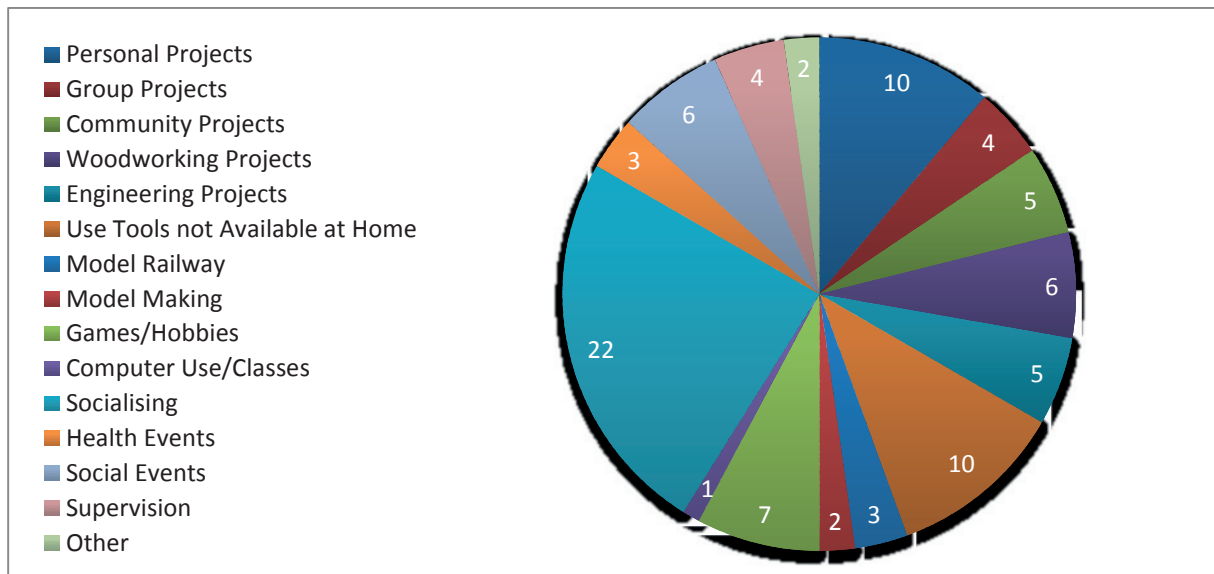
Visitor numbers to the Men's Shed have been impressive over the course of the opening period, as the following graph detailing monthly (4-weekly) visitor numbers demonstrates; note the consistent upward trend over the first 18 months, and the levelling out thereafter.



At the end of the 22nd month of opening, the average monthly visitor number stood at 222 (55.6 per week, or 18.5 per day [Monday average = 15.5, Wednesday average = 14.9, Friday average = 25.3]), and the Men's Shed welcomed its 5000th 'official' visitor in terms of overall footfall (in terms of unique visitors, $n \approx 500$). Regarding respondent's attendance, the largest group (56%) reported attending the Men's Shed on average once per week, 36% reported attending twice a week or more, and 9% reported once fortnightly or less. Regarding the average length of time spent per session, 50% reported 1 to 3 hours, 44% reported more than 3 hours, and 6% reported staying less than an hour. Taking the total attendance at the Men's Shed over the entirety of the opening period (for convenience, the slightly conservative figure of 5000), and assuming the 6% who stayed for less than an hour stayed for 30 minutes, the 50% who stayed between 1 and 3 hours stayed for 2 hours, and the 44% who stayed for over three hours stayed for 4 hours, it can thus be stated that the Men's Shed has provided 13950 hours of social interaction and focused recreational activity for participants since opening (this is of course a very rough estimate, though even if the lowest possible figures are used, and non-participating visitors are taken into account, the calculations still yield a total of over 10000 hours, still an impressive figure). Regarding the amount of time respondents had participated at the Men's

Shed, 59% reported 13 months or more, 32% reported 7 to 12 months, and 9% reported 0 to 6 months, suggesting a high degree of 'loyalty' on the part of participants.

Regarding the reasons participants attended the Men's Shed, 65% reported socialising as one of their three given options. The next highest categories, both of which received 29%, were to use tools not available at home, and to work on personal projects, and the third highest, at 21% was the games and hobbies category.

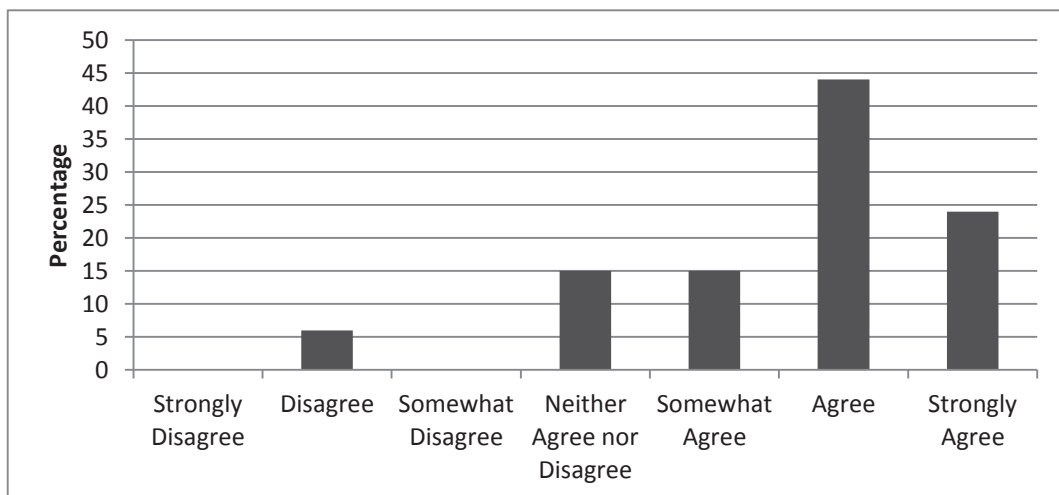


On this question, respondents were 'forced' to select only the three answers they felt most aligned with their reasons for attending the Men's Shed; for example, it can be seen that 22 out of the 34 respondents gave 'socialising' as one of their three reasons. It may be noted that the overall number of responses to this question number only 90, when they should number 102 (34 x 3 = 102); unfortunately, 4 respondents gave more than 3 answers, and their responses had to be discounted, as there was no way to tell which, if any, would have been their top 3 (though it can be said that 3 of these respondents noted socialising as one of their reasons, which would raise the total figure to 25, or 74%). The fact that socialising received more than double the next most frequent response suggests that the social function of the Men's Shed, allowing participants to make new friends they are comfortable to spend time with, is extremely important; as respondent 24 put it, *"I have seen new friendships formed, skills shared, lots of laughter and banter... I have heard amazing stories of men's lives and look forward to going to the Shed"*. Finally, 94% of respondents stated that they had either spoken about or recommended the Men's Shed to other men, and this is encouraging, given that word of mouth is important in establishing the membership of a Men's Shed.

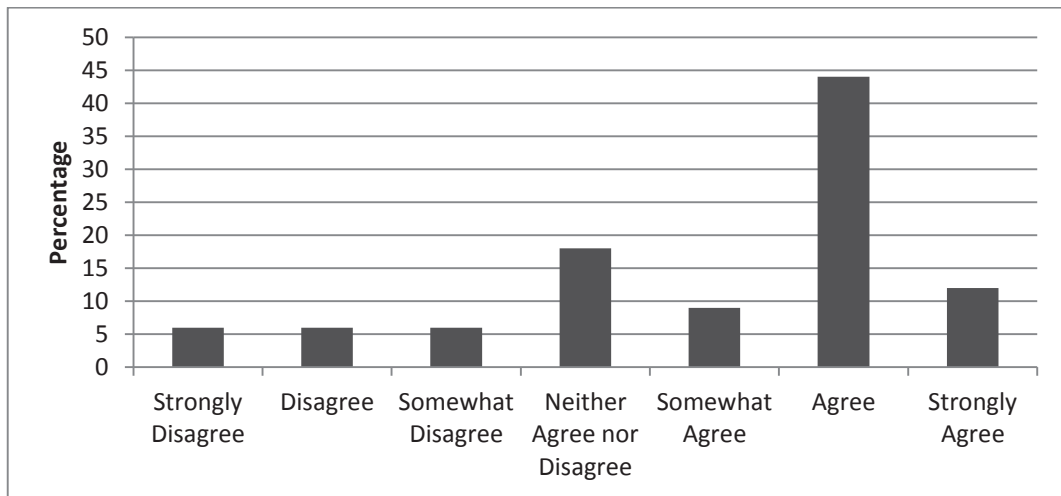
Benefits of the Men's Shed

The Likert response format questions, in which statements regarding the participant and the Men's Shed were presented and the degree of agreement or disagreement was sought, were mainly designed to assess, in the simplest terms, the benefits of the Men's Shed as perceived by participants, with questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 focusing on this issue. The Likert response format was utilised as it is easy to understand, being quite familiar to most people, and because the answers can be easily interpreted. It generates ordinal level data, meaning that it can be ranked, though the distance between each ranking is not known (for example, the distance between 'agree' and 'strongly agree' is not known). Note that each statement regarding the benefits experienced by participants makes reference to the respondent's presence at the Men's Shed specifically, therefore they only enquire as to the effect of the Men's Shed (as in statement 1, 'I have learned new skills *at the Men's Shed*', not 'I have learned new skills, potentially outwith the Men's Shed, during the time I have been a participant'), which is the independent variable, on the dependent variable (for example, learning new skills, making friends, feeling respected). Also note that these questions mainly concern elements external to the individual, as opposed to their internal feelings. It is assumed, quite validly I believe, that, for example, making new friends or learning new skills is a positive thing for a man to do; one need only consult prior, and more in-depth, research to find a convincing case that this is so. Results were as follows;

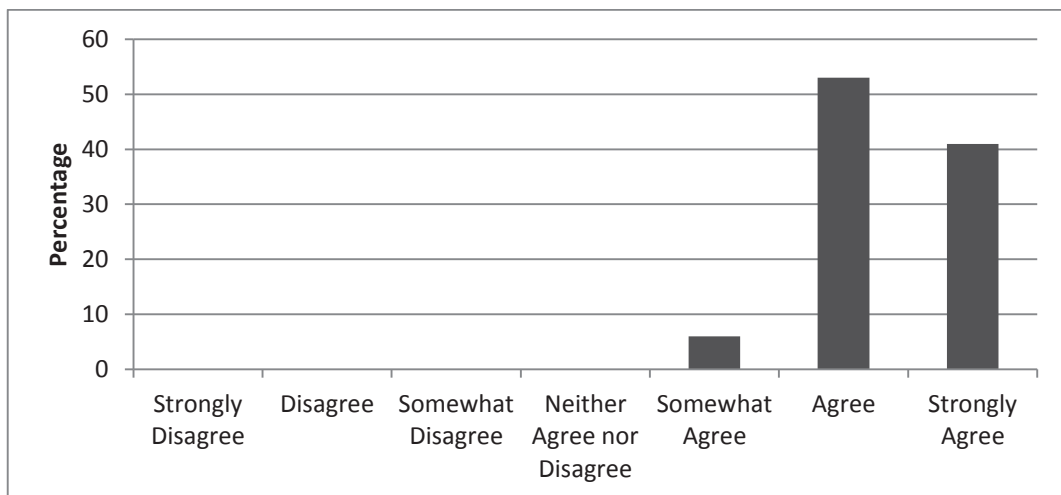
Statement 1: *I have learned new skills at the Men's Shed*



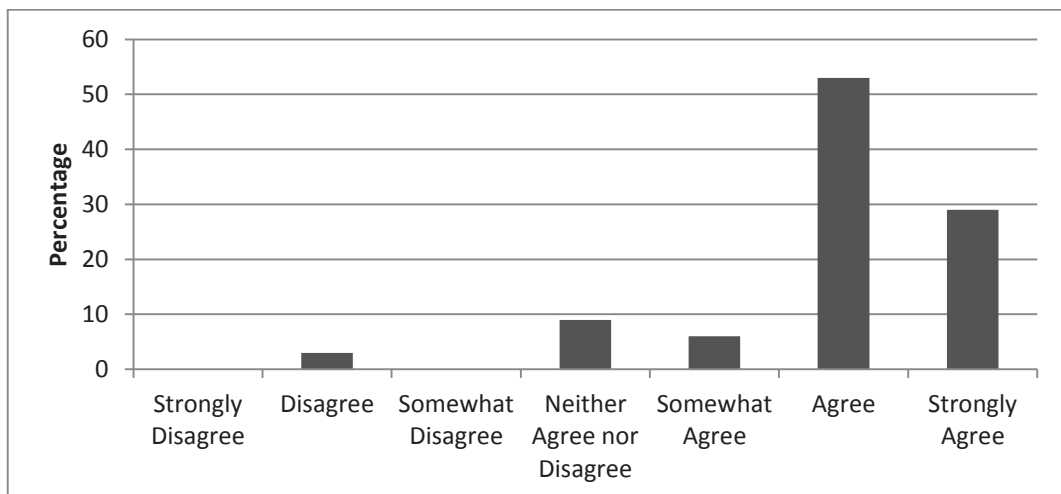
Statement 2: I have learned about my health at the Men's Shed



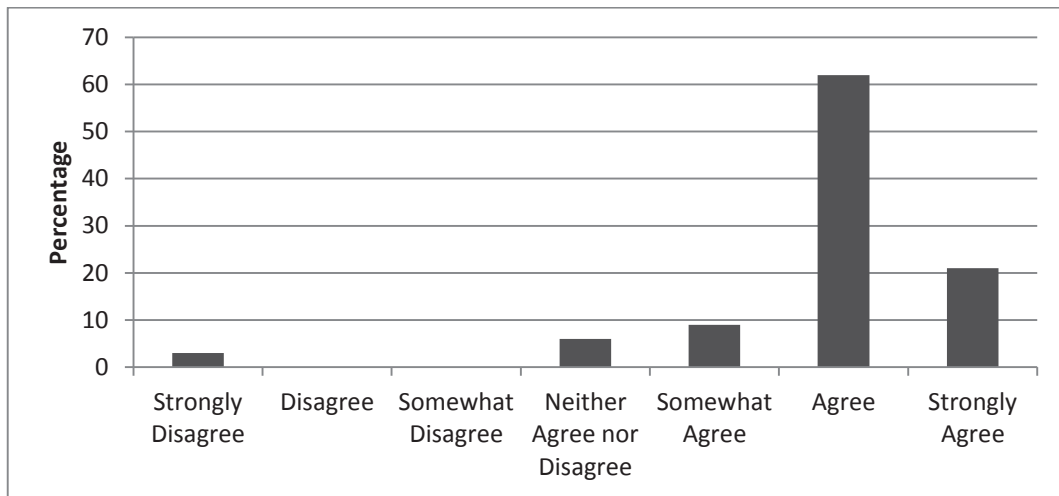
Statement 3: I have made new friends at the Men's Shed



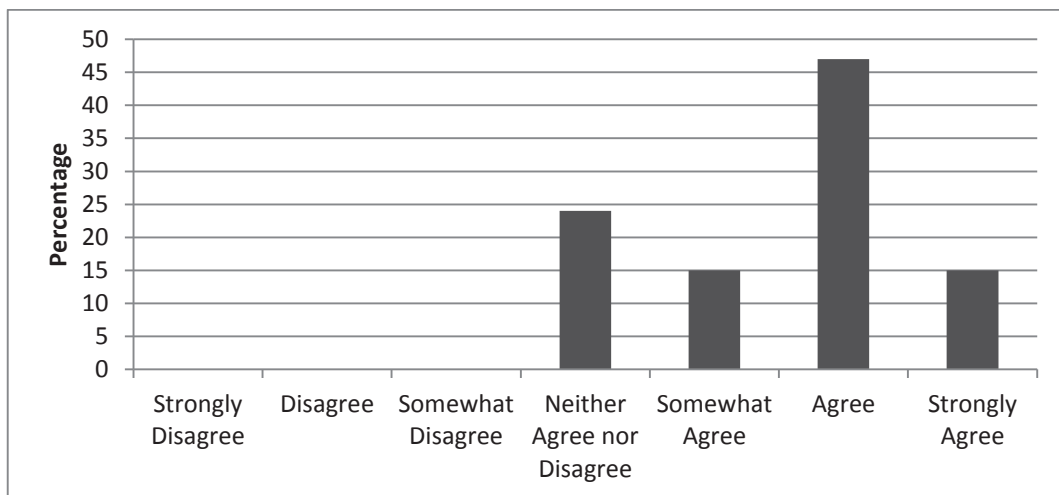
Statement 5: The Men's Shed gives me a chance to use my skills to help others



Statement 6: I feel respected at the Men's Shed



Statement 8: The Men's Shed has improved my life



As can be seen from these results, it appears that in the vast majority of cases, the Men's Shed has generated tangible benefits for participants; 68% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with statement 1, whilst 83% agreed at least somewhat. 56% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with statement 2, whilst 65% agreed at least somewhat. 94% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with statement 3, whilst 100% agreed at least somewhat. 82% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with statement 5, whilst 88% agreed at least somewhat. 83% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with statement 6, whilst 92% agreed at least somewhat. 62% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with statement 8, whilst 77% agreed at least somewhat. The modal response (most frequently occurring response) to each statement was 'agree'. The primary benefit appears to be the establishment of new friendships (statement 3), with every respondent at least somewhat agreeing that they had made new friends at the Men's Shed, which is in line with the finding

above that 65% of participants noted socialising as one of their reasons for attending; as respondent 2 put it, "*all the members appear [to be] helpful and friendly, all are willing to share experiences and knowledge, and all seem to enjoy a chat..just to chat and communicate with like-minded people is good*". For respondent 13, the Men's Shed provided a "*good environment in which to relax*", whilst for respondent 29, "*the happy atmosphere says it all*".

There was also significant agreement with statements 1 and 5; as respondent 15 put it, "*men [are] delighted to use their skills again and pass on/train others*", highlighting the environment of informal teaching and learning that exists at the Men's Shed. The least agreed upon statement was number 2, focusing on the bolstering of health knowledge at the Men's Shed. Although the majority at least somewhat agreed (as respondent 24 typically put it, "*I have learnt more about my physical health (prostate) and about strokes*"), there is also a greater skew towards disagreement, with a significant minority (36%) not agreeing. Regarding those statements that focused on perceptions of the Men's Shed itself, rather than on what the individual was gaining from their participation, there was again a high degree of satisfaction expressed. Statement 4, 'I am happy with the variety of projects available at the Men's Shed' enquired as to participant's satisfaction with the choice of workshop projects they could engage in; 91% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed, with no disagreements. Respondents also particularly stated the satisfaction gained through community projects, with respondent 32 noting that "*helping the community (especially charities) makes me feel good about myself*", whilst respondent 24 had "*seen the pride in the men when they have handed over their community projects*". Statement 7, 'the Men's Shed is managed in an open and democratic fashion', focused on participant's perceptions of the management of the Men's Shed; 85% either agreed or strongly agreed, again with no disagreements.

When utilising Likert response items, the accusation of social desirability bias can always be made; this refers to respondents answering questions in a manner they perceive to be socially desirable, for example, those responding to a survey may answer according to what they perceive to be the questioner's desired response, or to avoid incriminating themselves. Of relevance to the current survey is the first instance, for example, considering statement 8, 'the Men's Shed has improved my life', participants may have felt as though answering in the affirmative was the desired response, given their consideration of the purpose of the survey. Whilst it is impossible to tell for certain the degree to which this bias is present in the responses, I would state that the results obtained appear to align quite closely with PhD fieldwork observations over the past 20 months; the fact of the matter is that participants have made new friends at the Men's Shed, they have learned new skills, they have shared their skills with others, and they have discussed how the Men's Shed has improved their lives; I have seen

this with my own eyes, and heard it many times. Likewise, I have seen and heard from men who merely utilise the Men's Shed as an enjoyable pastime, rather than seeking anything more from it, and this is also reflected in the findings; there is by no means universal agreement, as would be expected were responses influenced by social desirability bias. I would thus state that the results presented here validate my own observations, and my own observations validate the results presented here. Other forms of potential bias present in survey research include central tendency bias, a tendency to respond down the middle, in this case, the neutral category, 'neither agree nor disagree', though this does not appear to be an issue here, and the extreme response bias, whereby extreme responses (either strongly disagree or strongly agree in the current survey) are preferred, though again, this does not appear to be an issue here.

Conclusion

This survey, though very basic, does set out in an easily understandable fashion what I think everyone involved with the Men's Shed already knows; that is, the Men's Shed provides a welcoming and invigorating space in which mainly older and retired men are afforded the opportunity to make new friends with like-minded others, to learn from their experiences and share their own, and should they wish to, learn about their health as well, all of which ultimately contribute to living a healthy and fulfilling retirement.

Appendix 5 : References

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Mentoring Support

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