



SCOTLAND'S LARGEST
MEN'S HEALTH & WELLBEING CHARITY

In Scotland, For Scotland



Supporting men's health and wellbeing through Scottish Men's Sheds

MANIFESTO OF THE SCOTTISH MEN'S SHEDS ASSOCIATION



The Scottish Men's Sheds Movement Continues to Grow...



10,000+
MEMBERS



200+
MEN'S SHEDS



4,400+

SMSA INDIVIDUAL
MEMBERS



174

SMSA MEMBER
SHEDS



66

SHEDS IN
DEVELOPMENT



32

LOCAL
AUTHORITY
AREAS





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'A Men's Shed for every community in Scotland'

This is more than just a manifesto. The SMSA does not feel that its plans are over ambitious but rather, they are SMART plans —specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely—to truly transform and commit to a better future for men's health and wellbeing in Scotland.

SMSA's vision is that every man in Scotland will, one day, have access to—and the opportunity to attend—their local Men's Shed if they choose to do so. To underpin the ongoing creation of a health by stealth and voluntary social wellbeing pathway for men requires strategic funding and support from several key funders and partners to make this come to fruition.

The Association is trailblazing this Movement to encourage a social change, raise awareness of the wealth of diverse benefits of Men's Sheds and ultimately secure its future growth and the national investment it rightly deserves.

Sheds provide a new opportunity for men's social and wellbeing needs whether that is escape from a present situation, calm, relaxation and respite and/or fun and friendship and/or to learn new skills, mentor or be mentored through kindness and healthy camaraderie.

SMSA supports Sheds to help create these environments in every locality in Scotland for a better quality of life for Scottish men, their families, circle of friends and communities. SMSA promotes the Movement to all sectors and the public across Scotland which results in the unprecedented growth of the grassroots movement in the charity sector.

The Scottish Men's Sheds Movement and its members are: transforming disused and vandalised buildings and

improving surrounding areas across Scotland; offering services to the community (e.g. repair services, allotments/shared gardens/community spaces); promoting health campaigns (e.g. cancer, healthy living); reducing carbon footprint through the recycle, reuse, reclaim and repair ethos; generating income through the selling of wares (bird houses, mud kitchens, planters, etc); sustaining traditional skills (woodturning, carving etc); offering training courses to educate/upskill members; and creating intergenerational bonds and relationships 'shoulder to shoulder'.

The time is right to expand the SMSA and its support services in line with the growth of the Movement to support Sheds across Scotland in the long-term.

SMSA is urging the Scottish Government and all politicians, as well as other funders, to heavily invest in us and achieve great returns fiscally and socially.

The recommended six actions (on page 8), our unwavering commitment to play our part in achieving a wellbeing economy, backed by Scottish peer-reviewed and internationally-published research, clearly shows we are leaders in our field delivering measurable impacts and significant sustainable outcomes.

We now need your support to achieve this next three year growth phase for the Movement. Please join us and become part of the next chapter in this incredible journey and success story, we can't do it without you!

SMSA pledges to continue making a real difference by empowering thousands of men (our sons, brothers, fathers, uncles and grandfathers) and their communities - over the coming years - to play their part in a system change towards a wellbeing economy.



INTRODUCTION

The [Scottish Men's Sheds Association](#) (SMSA) is spearheading the Men's Sheds Movement in Scotland. SMSA exists to inspire and support men over the age of 18 with time on their hands to become engaged, in a healthy way, by voluntarily creating—or attending—their own Men's Sheds in their local communities across Scotland.

SMSA's sole focus is to grow the Movement in Scotland and promote its life-changing impact and encourage more men to access their local Men's Shed to connect with their communities and improve their health and wellbeing. The membership organisation, founded in 2014, has created a fit for purpose framework, successful support pathway and two-tiered engagement strategy (through a national Shed and free Individual Membership scheme) for a new male health by stealth Movement to become an independent thriving success.

Over the years, SMSA has grown to provide a wealth of tailored development tools, support, guidance and advice (in accordance with Scottish law) for start-up and established Sheds to make them fit-for-purpose and sustainable including animations, Shed-specific OSCR-approved constitutions; Community Asset Transfers; COVID-19 guidance, emergency funding to keep Sheds open and health and safety procedures and film.

In addition to its free support and advice, SMSA has developed a range of benefits for its Shed Members including discounted insurance, accounts package, electricity, tools and training. SMSA is the voice of the Movement and represents the sector in local areas through regional Shed meetings but also nationally at events and by sitting on cross-sector strategic groups.

A victim of its own success, the SMSA—as it stands today with a team of four—simply cannot continue to meet the needs of the exponential growth of the Movement. SMSA is the only dedicated organisation providing tailored support in the communities where Men's Sheds

WHAT IS A MEN'S SHED?

A Men's Shed is a shared space where men – from all walks of life - attend voluntarily to work on practical projects or simply find camaraderie, conversation and friendship. Men's Sheds help to address social isolation and loneliness, regenerate and build sustainable communities and improve men's health and wellbeing.

Men's Sheds are changing people's lives – not just the men but also their families, friends and communities. Sheds have created a new preventative male health and wellbeing model as well as an avenue for effective engagement with a hard-to-reach group...men. Sheds reduce social isolation, loneliness, depression/anxiety and can increase confidence and the sense of purpose/belonging in an inclusive and supportive male environment.

This unprecedented support impacts positively on thousands of people's lives across Scotland by helping them become active citizens in their communities. This unique non-competitive and all-inclusive male socialisation model originated in Australia and is thriving in 12 countries. It uses purposefulness and kindness as its main drivers which impacts positively on all participants. It is a win-win situation for the men, the Shed, their family and friends, the community as a whole and aligns with Scotland's national wellbeing indicators.

are being set up across Scotland from the initial seed idea to the developmental pathway and to supporting established Sheds with mediation and sustainability challenges.

This manifesto aims to put measures in place to support this thriving national, sustainable and voluntary-led male health movement and its 'bigger picture'.



THE MEN'S SHEDS MOVEMENT IN SCOTLAND

The Scottish Men's Sheds Movement began in 2009 and, from the launch of the first Shed in 2013 (Westhill Men's Shed, Aberdeenshire), there has been domino-effect success across the nation resulting in 200+ known open and developing Sheds to date, engaging over 10,000 men, and they are continuing to grow at a rapid rate (even during the pandemic).

Men can find it very difficult to talk about their feelings—especially regarding their health and loneliness. By offering a place where men can put the world to rights and offload their troubles amongst peers—without alcohol or drugs involved—creates a happy, healthy, inclusive, social environment that ultimately improves their quality of life both in and out of the Shed.

Men's Sheds are about creating healthy socialisation environments which support the masculine 'shoulder to shoulder' communication and engagement with purpose psychology. As Sheds are not prescriptive in their activities, each individual Shed is reactive to their own members' needs and are therefore attractive and sustainable in the long-term attracting men voluntarily to experience peer to peer kindness and supportive new friendships.

MSMA is here to support the future of Scotland's Men's Sheds by providing robust advice, relevant information, inspiring strategies, good practice models and guidance for a successful and sustainable grassroots Movement.

It is our vision that every man in Scotland will, one day, have access to—and the opportunity to attend—their local Men's Shed if they choose to do so.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- [Sheds for Sustainable Development Project, Glasgow Caledonian University](#): Studies show that although men are more likely to face more illness than women, they are also less likely to use formal healthcare. Men's Sheds have been identified as a potential way for men to access support and take part in positive health behaviours in an informal 'male friendly' environment
- [Men's Health Forum](#):
 - Suicide amongst men is rising in Scotland (78% of suicides are by men) and Scotland has the highest suicide rate in the UK
 - Men are nearly three times more likely than women to become alcohol dependent (8.7% of men are alcohol dependent compared to 3.3% of women—Health and Social Care Information Centre)

RESEARCH

- [MSMA's Social Return on Investment](#) research based on Westhill Men's Shed showed that for every £1 invested in Sheds there was a social capital return of £9.34 in terms of health and social care and community learning outcomes
- Glasgow Caledonian University's Three-Year 'Sheds for Sustainable Development Project' (Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund—£150,000)
 - Briefing: [Sustainable development of Sheds](#)
 - Briefing: [The health and wellbeing impacts of Sheds](#)
 - Briefing: [Sheds as an alternative route for male health engagement](#)
 - Publication: [Men's Sheds: a conceptual exploration of the causal pathways for health and wellbeing—Health & Social Care in the Community](#)
 - Publication: [Men's Sheds in Scotland the potential for improving the health of men—Journal of Public Health Policy](#)
 - Publication: [Men's Sheds as an alternative healthcare route? A qualitative study of the impact of Men's Sheds on user's health improvement behaviours—Bio-Medical Central \(BMC\) Public Health](#)



BREAKING THE SILENCE ON MEN'S HEALTH

Through its Shed-Wise programme, the Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA) is championing a much-needed shift in health and wellbeing for men across Scotland.

Men are statistically more likely to take risks with their health and wellbeing—including higher rates of alcohol and drug misuse, obesity, smoking and other poor lifestyle choices—which can lead to serious long-term consequences.

Scotland's men also face considerable health challenges including rising mental health issues and a persistently high suicide rate.

This highlights the urgent need for targeted men's health initiatives and continued focus on both physical and mental wellbeing. And, that's why this all-embracing Shed-Wise programme exists and is offered directly in Scottish Men's Sheds to hard-to-reach men.

Small changes can make a big difference!

Delivered by SMSA Development Officers, the in-Shed presentations encourage men to have voluntary and honest conversations about men's health.

Shed-Wise is about prevention, awareness, and action. Being strong doesn't mean staying silent and this initiative empowers men to take charge of their wellbeing.

The sessions, delivered in the safe space of their local Shed, focus in on key men's health matters such as diabetes, heart health, alcohol and smoking risks, blood pressure, Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA), dementia,

Did you know? In Scotland:

Working-age men are 50% less likely to visit a GP than women

Shockingly, one in five men won't live to reach retirement age

Scotland has high rates of smoking, obesity, alcohol and drug-related deaths

The male suicide rate remains over three times higher than the female rate

cancer awareness (testicular, bowel, breast, prostate, and skin) and coping skills.

The Shed-wise goal?

To help men take charge of their health, make informed choices, and lead longer, healthier lives.

Strong. Silent.... No More!

It's time to break the silence and speak up for men's health.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

The SMSA's manifesto was created by the charity to call upon politicians, invested groups and the general public to support Men's Sheds across Scotland and fully recognise the wealth of health and wellbeing benefits for men. The SMSA sets out and recommends six actions to improve the support available to men (aged 18+) in Scotland by having access to and attending a Men's Shed in their local community.

1. Investment to lead change

The bigger long-term picture is reliant on sustaining the core staff team of the SMSA by securing stable long-term funding to enable the Association to continue its unique support in maintaining and co-ordinating a thriving grassroots Men's Sheds Movement in Scotland.

SMSA needs the support to be at the forefront of improving men's health and wellbeing through the benefits of Sheds and strengthen the unified voice of 'Shedders' across Scotland to ensure they are heard and their needs are met. The SMSA calls on the Scottish Government to take urgent action to support the SMSA and Men's Sheds in Scotland to reap the positive results like the Australian (\$3.5 million per annum) and Irish (€500,000 per annum) governments are doing for our equivalent national Men's Sheds Associations.

2. Improved localised support for Shed Network

To meet local need, SMSA has identified the need for the provision of seven Development Officers across Scotland to provide bespoke strategies. This will embed enough grassroots development, localised partnership building and mentoring (through an SMSA Shed Ambassador programme) to create a model of self-sustainability and good governance across the national Shed network.

3. A start-up and development fund for Sheds

To create a fund, co-ordinated and managed by the SMSA, for new and existing Sheds to access start-up and/or development monies (not running costs) for their group in communities across Scotland. This strategy of support continues to harvest good results as part of the Australian Men's Sheds development plan.

4. A focused national awareness campaign

A focused promotion of the array of benefits of Men's Sheds and the recent Scottish research findings to health professionals and agencies (who can also social prescribe or community link) highlighting the value of Men's Sheds as community-based organisations that can create practical and social activities that encourage positive health behaviours and outcomes.

5. Improved reach to the Armed Forces and Veterans community and Blue Light services

To improve our reach to the Armed Forces and Veterans community and Blue Light services (police, fire services, emergency responders) by working in co-production with the relevant charities, agencies, community groups, Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) and the Ministry of Defence to provide integrated support through the promotion of the 'choice' to access the Men's Shed as an active transition model back into citizenship.

6. Delivery of preventative men's health sessions in Scottish Men's Sheds

SMSA's Development Officers will deliver 'SHEDWISE' tailored preventative health sessions in Sheds covering diabetes, living heart healthy, dementia, coping skills, alcohol, smoking, abdominal aortic aneurysm, blood pressure and cancer (testicular, bowel, breast, prostate and skin). The aim of the sessions are to empower men to increase their awareness, prioritise their health needs, make better informed decisions and address male help-seeking behaviours.



FEEDBACK ON SMSA SUPPORT

Aberchirder & District Men's Shed

"In 2016, our village librarian saw an article regarding the rise of the Men's Shed Movement in Scotland and contacted the SMSA. Without that first contact, I strongly believe that our Shed would not exist. Being Scotland-specific, Jason and his team had the knowledge and contacts to make things happen."

Garnock Valley Men's Shed

"I wish to thank the SMSA for its assistance in helping to establish our Shed. From the outset, we were invited to a Shed Training Day where the process for establishing a successful Shed and the role of Trustees was clearly explained. As SMSA Shed Members, we are able to access the online library from which we receive the relevant documentation (constitution, health and safety policy etc) required to set up and run our Shed. Perhaps the greatest benefit is having a well-informed friendly voice at the end of a telephone when we need advice."

Hawick Men's Shed

"Our Shed joined the SMSA in 2016 and as a result, have enjoyed advantageous rates for insurance and general running costs; access to a wealth of contacts with other Sheds in the Borders and beyond; assistance with the establishment and promotion of Borders Shedfests; receipt of The Scottish Shedder newsletter advising us of activities in other Scottish Sheds and offering the chance of free promotion of our activities; and access to the SMSA website."

Kinross and District Men's Shed

"The SMSA has been a wonderful support and a great centre of information and advice. Without the SMSA, it is safe to say, we and some other local Sheds would not exist without their help steering us in the right direction—through the obstacles and bureaucracy that is thrown at you especially when starting something new—and enabling us to become self-sufficient."

Lockerbie Men's Shed

"We have found the SMSA to be an extremely helpful partner organisation—both in starting up the Shed and in the years following—we simply would not be running without them. The online resources have been invaluable. Having a national body promoting Shedding and helping to publicise the activities of other Sheds, through The Scottish Shedder newsletter, is a good way of getting positive support and affirmation. The newsletter has also inspired members to try activities they've seen other Sheds getting involved with. Knowing that SMSA is there, with support tailored to helping run a Shed in Scotland has been a great help. Sometimes, we just need a friendly, knowledgeable voice to help keep us on the right track when dealing with councils, government bodies, funders etc."

The Men Of Leith Men's Shed

"The SMSA delivered a template constitution which we used successfully to gain charitable status—saving us considerable time and effort."

Orkney Men's Shed

"Our original committee were new to the Movement and we are very grateful for the support and encouragement we received from SMSA. As members, we are able to access their comprehensive library of paperwork, procedures and resources, which is a vital part of any Shed and can be burdensome. This library made our set up much easier."

Penicuik & District Men's Shed

"When trying to set up a Shed in my area, I contacted Jason who from the outset has been totally supportive in assisting me to set up the local Shed and still continues to offer support whilst building up the network."

Roslin Men's Shed

"We value the support of SMSA who are a phone call or email away and The Scottish Shedder newsletter and online resources are excellent. The insurance discounts are an area we also benefit from."



Fred Brown, Garnock Valley Men's Shed

"I had been in the building game all my life before losing the sight in one eye in an accident. It felt like the end of my world. I sat at home – kept myself to myself – and got seriously down with not being able to do what I did before. I kept being told to go along to the Men's Shed by friends and the job centre. The Men's Sheds and the introduction of model building gives these men the opportunity to experience the kind of banter and camaraderie that they are used to and hopefully also result in them enjoying both a practical and sociable new hobby. The biggest buzz I get is seeing the progress made by these men. This mentoring is changing lives and I am just being me!"

Derek McLaren Dow, Broughty Ferry Men's Shed

"The Shed has changed my life. I didn't retire at 65, but continued as I felt I could go on, however ill health hit and I went from the daily work routine to being confined to the house for the next 12 months. My good lady encouraged me to find out about Men's Sheds and the rest is history. It has been my saviour and given me a purpose. So, look for a Shed in your local area and pop in and have a chat – it could change your life."

Stewart McLean, Roslin Men's Shed

"Men's Sheds get people out of the house—it is a win-win situation for me, the Shed and the community. Going along to the Shed gave me a new outlook on life. Sheds have such a positive impact on men. Here, I am making friends for life, keeping active, passing on my skills to others and learning new ones at the same time. I would urge other men to pop along and check out their local Shed."

Stuart Paton, Garnock Valley Men's Shed

"I am very open about the fact that I have made several attempts to end my life. The Shed and my newfound Shedder friends have definitely saved my life without a doubt. I have found real, meaningful friendship and these men don't realise how much they have done for me. I can't say enough good things about the Shed."

Richard Potts, Paisley Men's Shed

"The Shed has opened up new horizons for me. I am full of civic pride and joining has allowed me to share my passion, skills and knowledge with a great bunch of guys in my community and be a catalyst for change. It is an absolute joy to be a part of this Movement."

Bruce Newlands, The Inverclyde Shed

"I see the physical and mental health benefits of Sheds and for me it is about making things, the camaraderie, the banter and seeing other guys achieving things and the pride that they feel. I believe that Sheds are places that can accommodate many different perspectives and experiences and we should celebrate this."

Jon Searle, Wee County Men's Shed

"For me, my new idyllic leisure-filled low-pressure life in retirement was not so idyllic. Where was the excitement, the responsibilities, the challenges that I was used to? Yes, I now had the time to work on all those projects I had put off for so long and complete those I had started and not finished, but... I was bored. So, if you feel as I did before I joined my local Shed then why not come along and find out more?"

Eric Box, St Andrews Men's Shed

"I was persuaded to 'try' the Shed and after my first visit, I was hooked. Initially, I was put to work helping to make dozens of wood planters, some of which are now on display at Leuchars Railway Station. However, I quickly gravitated to the wood lathes. I had some experience using them, but we are lucky to have some excellent wood turners in our Shed and they were only too happy to teach me the skills required to turn out some decent pieces. I progressed from making wooden apples and pears, to turning out small Christmas trees and then bowls. I was in the middle of turning a bowl made from laminated plywood boards stuck together, when bang, we were in COVID-19 lockdown! My bowl is still in place in the lathe chuck and I look forward to finishing it one day soon."

Keith Johnston, Moffat & District Men's Shed

"Since our inception, our Shed has undertaken many tasks in the community through which we have earned great respect and appreciation in the process—and became a valued local resource. One of our highlights was being able to help some of our local children, who would otherwise have missed out at Christmas, by supplying them with gifts. Also, at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, we were able to supply £500 worth of emergency food to be distributed within our community—and we are immensely proud of our Sheddors for providing this type of support in a time of great need."

Nick Pilbeam, Westhill Men's Shed

"First and foremost, we are here for our Sheddors. One of our much-loved members, Bob Owen, passed away at the age of 94 and we will always remember what he said when asked to reflect on how the Shed, and his fellow Sheddors, had impacted on him. Bob shared that the Shed not only gave him a new lease of life following the death of his wife - who had encouraged him to go to the Shed - but getting in that workshop took away all his aches and pains. When you hear feedback like this, it makes everything that we are doing worthwhile."



**SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION**



BECOME AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER

FOR FREE

By joining the SMSA charity, together we are strengthening the Men's Sheds Movement in Scotland.

SMSA Individual Members receive:

- ▶ A welcome pack and goodies
- ▶ Latest news on the Movement
- ▶ 'The Scottish Shedder' magazine direct to your inbox
- ▶ Advice and assistance

Pick up a SMSA leaflet in your local Shed
or visit www.scottishmsa.org.uk/join

Follow the SMSA at:



'In Scotland, For Scotland'

SMSA is a charity registered in Scotland (No. SC045139)



**SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION**

Are you passionate about improving men's health and wellbeing in Scotland? Do you support the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement?

All individuals (men and women aged 18+) can join the SMSA for FREE at:

www.scottishmsa.org.uk/memberships



*The SMSA is a registered Scottish charity (SC045139), its **Board of Trustees**—all volunteers that receive no remuneration for their time and efforts—passionately believe in the SMSA's vision for the people of Scotland.*

*The charity's small **staff team** of passionate individuals work to promote and support the growth of the grassroots movement across Scotland. From speaking to hundreds of individuals requiring support to start their own Men's Shed; creating pathways and documentation specific to Scottish law; and lobbying policymakers on men's health and wellbeing.*

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