

# Background Information

## UK Men's Sheds Association

The UK Men's Sheds Association was formed on March 15th 2013 at a meeting of 17 of the then 26 open or planned Men's Shed from all areas except Northern Ireland. Our purposes, objectives and constitution were adopted at that meeting and a Steering Committee nominated.

The purpose of the Association is to improve men's health and wellbeing by promoting the concept and supporting the development of Men's Sheds. Our objectives are to inform the public of the idea; to bring men together to plan Sheds; to provide development guidance through our website, by email, by phone and by visits; to provide other help that supports their growth (e.g. insurance, funds, discounts etc.) and to build a Shed community.

Our mission is to enable access to a Men's Shed for every man that would benefit from one and we won't stop until we've achieved it.

In the first year the Association's main income was from member subscriptions but a grant awarded in October 2014 enabled us to appoint a part time freelance Administrator. Further funding supported our plan to hold regional community-building and promotional events called 'Meet the Shedders' in 2015. These events and associated publicity substantially increased our public profile and website traffic. Since then, we have been successful in securing funding for the Chief Officer post, our Membership and Support Officer, and our National Shed Development Manager. In June 2015 our members voted for us to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

## The Shed Movement

At present there are 492 Sheds open and another 142 in planning. More than half of these are run completely voluntarily by local enthusiasts and their Sheds are run for their members by their members – "Shedders". Other Sheds are established by organisations such as branches of Age UK, Groundwork, CVS's, housing sector providers or equivalents. Some of the latter group have paid Shed Coordinators and are open all week whereas at the other end of the spectrum many member led Sheds are groups that meet for 2-4 hours a week in shared premises. The average membership of a Shed is 20 people.

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As the movement has become better known and valued, other support organisations have also formed. Each of the UK's nations now has its own support body ie: The Scottish Men's Sheds Association, Irish Men's Sheds Association and Men's Sheds Cymru – and more recently a European Men's Sheds Association – all of whom we look to continue to collaborate and work with to promote the movement and its benefits. As a result the focus of our proactive developmental work has shifted more towards England, but we continue to increase our membership from across the UK and will actively support any Shed if they want our support.

We actively collaborate with other organisations where they have the same objectives as our own – for example we have worked in partnership with the Royal Voluntary Service to support the creation of member- led Sheds as a way of addressing the problem of social isolation and loneliness among older people. We aim to work with national men's health providers and programmes such as Prostate Cancer UK and Movember Foundation, Men's Health Forum, national campaigns to help identify and reduce social isolation and loneliness such as The Jo Cox Foundation and the Campaign to End Loneliness. We aim to increase the visibility and understanding of the benefits of Sheds at national policy level.

We have a very committed new Chief Officer, Charlie Bethel, who comes to UKMSA with a wealth of experience from the third sector with over twenty years working in Paralympic Sport. Charlie is the former Chief Executive of British Wheelchair Basketball where he led the sport through tremendous growth in both participation and the structure of the organisation.

Supported by Charlie, and members of the board of trustees, the National Shed Development Manager is responsible for delivering our national Shed Development & Ambassador programme to facilitate the on-going growth and sustainability of the Men's Shed movement within the United Kingdom. Our Membership and Support Officer is our 'front desk' – answering general enquiries from the public, alongside providing information and advice to Sheds across the UK.

For further information about the Association and the Men's Sheds movement – please visit our website: [www.menssheds.org.uk](http://www.menssheds.org.uk)

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