

The Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMMSA) and the Men's Sheds Movement in Scotland

Dr Jason Schroeder
Founder and CEO
Scottish Men's Sheds Association



**SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION**

Welcome to a **great** day,
a day where you can be a part of
making positive social and health
changes for Scotland's men
and their communities



Men's Sheds Global picture



The Men's Sheds Movement began in Australia in 1993 to provide a space for craftwork and social interaction to improve the health and wellbeing of older men and veterans.



Across the globe, there are now 3,000+ open or developing Men's Sheds groups across 16 countries including: New Zealand, Canada, USA, Ireland, UK, Holland, Norway, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Spain, Denmark, Estonia, Kenya and South Africa.



**SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION**

IN SCOTLAND FOR SCOTLAND



The How

Until 2013 in Scotland we are not aware of any successful *healthy* engagement models or places where *all* men **voluntarily** and **actively** socialised with male health benefits.

Sheds grassroots run deep and spread...



Since 2013 when the first Scottish Men's Shed opened in Aberdeenshire there **are now over 200 open and developing Scottish Men's Sheds** engaging over **12,000 men** across **Scotland**. This number grows monthly showing a great **'support need'** in our communities!

The need



“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 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?”

Jon Searle, Wee County 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.”

Stuart Paton (Veteran) Garnock Valley Men’s Shed

Beneficiaries

Directly:

Men

Aged 18+

From all walks of life

Time on their hands

Indirectly:

Family

Friends

Community



What is a Men's Shed?

A healthy SOCIAL space with purpose

– gender specific focus

Voluntary attendance

‘For the Men By the Men’ – 18+ years old

Inclusive and welcoming

Friendship and camaraderie

Purposeful needs-led activities

Active citizenship

Male ‘health by stealth’ Movement

Regeneration/recycling/reuse/reclaim





A Men's Shed – the holy grail?



A few reasons behind this mystery

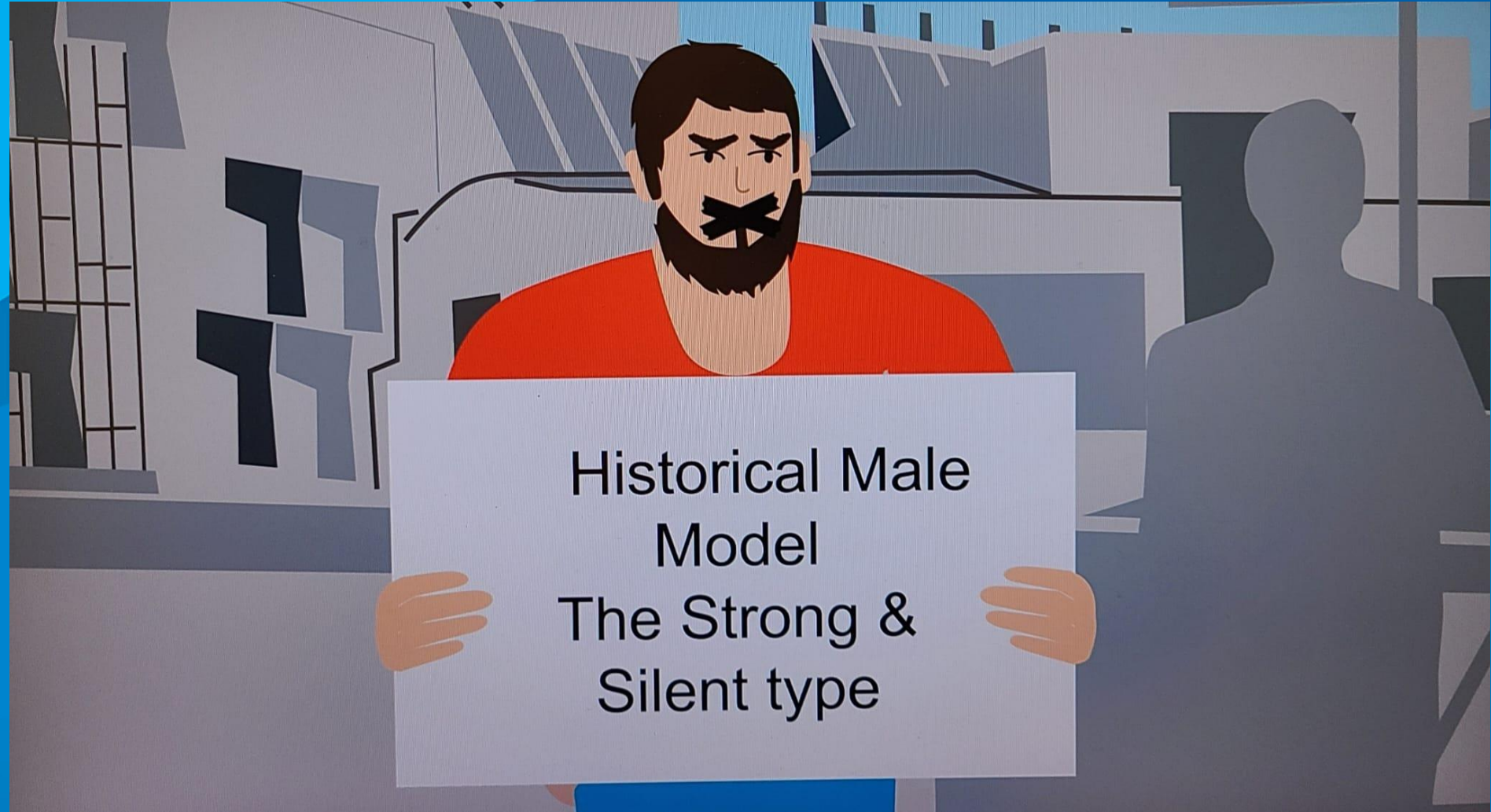
Spotlight on cultural inheritance

How did we get into this mess?



1 of the main reasons...

THE STRONG SILENT TYPE



1 of the main reasons... emotions



Sayings in our society towards boys like

Boys don't cry

Grow a pair

Man up

You're a sissy, stop being like a girl

All these statements are telling boys and men that speaking and showing their emotions are not acceptable – it is a weakness.



In the Men's Sheds Movement we are dealing with these casualties. By supporting a new intergenerational place through kindness, camaraderie and compassion men are voluntarily engaging in healing without being therapised, stigmatised or retraumatised.

1 of the main SOLUTIONS ...



To: The First Minister and the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health (Scottish Government)

SMSA's 'Silent No More' Campaign - Driving Forward a Scottish Men's Health Strategy



Campaign created by Scottish Men's Sheds Association



The call for action for men's health grows louder

Silent No More

Sign for change

The SMSA, working on behalf of our 5,000+ members and in partnership with other men's health charities and organisations across Scotland, are calling on all

1,442 of 2,000 signatures



Recent Signers

Leianne Canale C. 04-05-2026	Diane D. 04-05-2026	Sharon S. 04-05-2026
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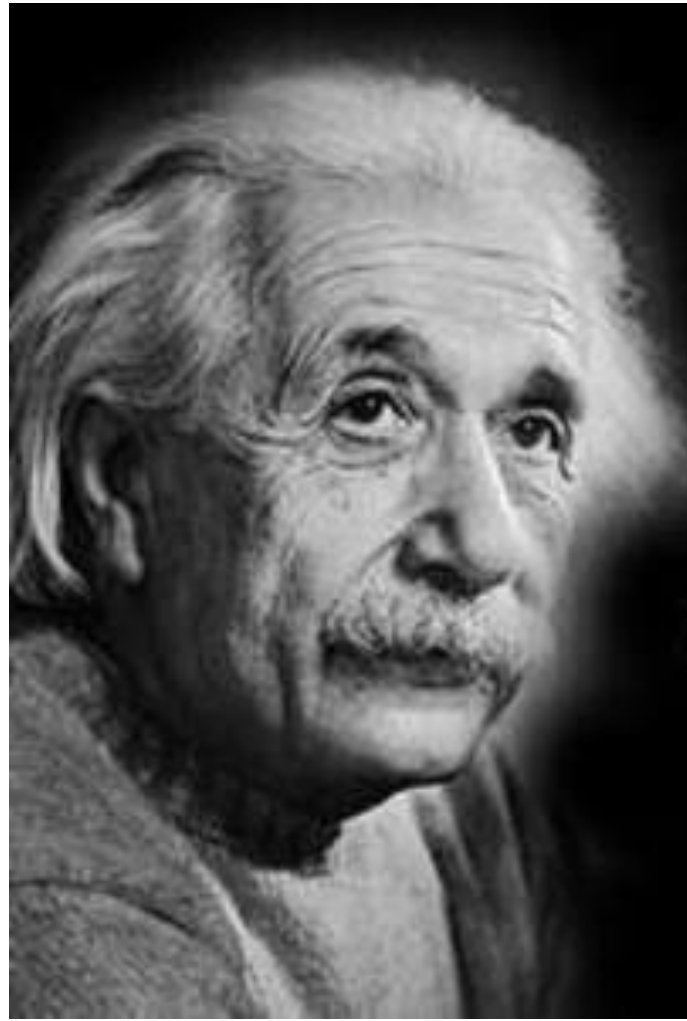
Sign the petition

Please confirm your age *

- I am 16 or 17 years old
- I am 18+ years old

I agree to 38 Degrees contacting me about important campaigns

- Yes, keep me informed via email
- No updates needed, I'm already



**"Insanity is doing the same
thing over & over again &
expecting different results."**

Albert Einstein

1 of the main SOLUTIONS ...



Representation – Voice

SMSA works in partnership with key groups and organisations and strives to connect with the key players promoting men's health including:

Age Scotland
Befriending Networks
British Red Cross
Campaign to End Loneliness
Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland
Community Resources Network Scotland
Contact the Elderly
The Eden Project Communities
Education Scotland
Glasgow Caledonian University
Health in Mind
Help for Heroes

Knowledge Exchange
Legion Scotland
Macmillan Cancer Care
MOT for Men
Prostate Scotland
Royal Blind
Scottish War Blinded
SCVO
The David Hume Institute
Together
Unforgotten Forces
Voluntary Health Scotland



Seeking Re-Connection:

Sheds are run as stand alone charities and this creates responsibility, ownership and self determination which is often missing in men's lives who have 'time on their hands'.

For Sheds to be sustainable in membership and finances they need the communities support.

It is from the local communities that their voluntary membership is drawn from.

Depending on the wide variety of skills in a Shed the Community support the shed with projects which gives the men purpose and the finances to run the Shed.

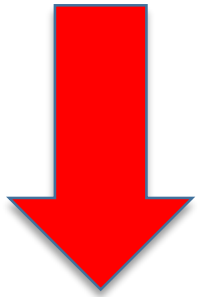




Shed Benefits



- social contact and confidence
- meaningful shoulder to shoulder' friendships'
- fun, respite, relaxation and/or escape
- feeling of being valued/respected
- sense of purpose, belonging, trust and kindness
- learn new or utilise skills
- mentor others on skills and experience
- improve physical health and wellbeing
- savings to government and health authorities
- regeneration, recycle, reuse and reclaim ethos
- sustain/pass on traditional skills



- social isolation/loneliness
- depression/anxiety
- suicide rate
- breakdown of the family unit



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



The Good and the Bad

Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is a formal process where a public authority transfers the ownership, lease, or management of land or buildings to a community organization. It allows eligible local groups to take over facilities at a discount to deliver long-term social, economic, or environmental benefits.

The Community Asset Transfer is governed by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. This act legally requires local authorities and other public bodies to assess in Men's Sheds cases a SCIO type charity for a transfer request and agree to it unless they have reasonable grounds to refuse.

This has helped get premises but it isn't as simple as it could be.

CAT Challenges

- 1) There is no standard CAT transfer process and all Councils have created their own.
- 2) Some Councils are supportive while others are not and want to charge **commercial rates** for leasing or create a difficult process hoping the community group will give up so they can try **sell** the buildings. Some buildings have been empty for 30 years and the Council has to pay Council Tax on those empty buildings which if a charity takes on the building they are immediately saving that tax.
- 3) Another major issue with the Community Empowerment Bill and CAT process is if **ownership** is chosen rather than a long term lease then the charities constitution has to be amended as it states that for **ownership** to be achieved the SCIO requires to have **20 members** and **MUST** be written into their **constitution**.

A **SCIO** only legally requires **three people** to exist but this creates an issue if the start up group doesn't have twenty members or in time the SCIO membership falls below twenty then it is not legal anymore.

This is acceptable to have twenty members for an ownership transfer but **NOT** as a **constitutional requirement**.

Land Transfer

To even make a transfer or right-to-buy request, a group must be officially recognised. The criteria state your organisation must:

- Be incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee, a **Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)**, or a Community Benefit Society.
- Have a written constitution that defines the specific **geographic** community or community of **interest**.
- **Ensure membership is open to anyone** within that community, and that local residents make up the voting majority and hold control over the board.

The criteria of **Geography** and **Interest** does not allow land transfer for Men's Sheds. Men's Sheds are **not** for all the community to attend and they are being forced to become 'Community' Sheds as a hobby shop rather than a men's health engagement movement with protected characteristics like the Scottish Women's Institute is for women.

Evidence-base



University for the Common Good



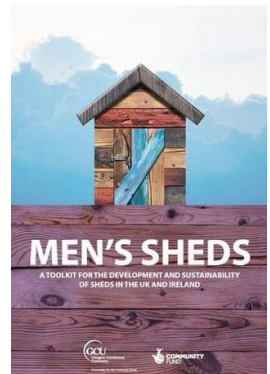
Briefings:

Sheds for Sustainable Development Project

- [Sustainable development of Sheds](#)
- [The health and wellbeing impacts of Sheds](#)
- [Sheds as an alternative route for male health engagement](#)
- [How Men's Sheds are addressing male social isolation and loneliness](#)

Publications:

- [Men's Sheds: a conceptual exploration of the causal pathways for health and wellbeing](#)—Health & Social Care in the Community
- [Men's Sheds in Scotland the potential for improving the health of men](#)—Journal of Public Health Policy
- [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



www.gcu.ac.uk/yunuscentre/research/communitycitizenshipandparticipation/sustainablesheds

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



12,200+
MEMBERS



200+
MEN'S SHEDS



5,000+
SMSA
MEMBERS



197
SMSA MEMBER
SHEDS



65
IN
DEVELOPMENT



32
LOCAL
AUTHORITY AREAS

Conclusion

As a result of being less socially isolated and lonely, men reported improvements in their overall health and wellbeing; this included

- An increased sense of happiness and contentment in their lives
- *Decreased feelings of depression and anxiety that came from being isolated*
- *An increased sense of purpose and meaning in their lives*
- *Increased feelings of confidence and self worth*
- *An increased sense of belonging and inclusion*

Unlike other community organisations, Men's Sheds are informal gendered initiatives, created '*by men for men*', that can be tailored to the specific health and social needs of local people. In particular, Sheds have been found to benefit vulnerable and marginalised men who may be viewed as harder to reach by primary health and social care services.

Although Sheds are not a formal healthcare service, our findings demonstrate that there is potential for such initiatives to be part of partnership health models such as social prescribing and sign posting – *Sheds for Sustainable Development Project, Dr D Kelly, GCU*



Are you passionate about Men's Health? Then support our health prevention Men's Shed Movement in Scotland?

Join for FREE today at...

www.scottishmsa.org.uk/join



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