

What Are Men's Sheds

and Why They Might Matter to RBL Members

by Robert Visintainer National Development Manager Wales – UKMSA



Ever wondered what a Men's Shed is? Picture a comfortable, welcoming space where folks gather, the kettle is boiling, tools at the ready, ready to chat, fix, create and most importantly, connect. That's a Men's Shed.

By their nature, Men's Sheds are local community spaces where members can enjoy practical hobbies, share skills, and enjoy a brew with some banter. They're informal, inclusive and yes, many men just come along for a cuppa and friendly conversation

[UKMSA UK Men's Shed Association](http://UKMSA.org.uk)

From jack-of-all-trades projects to helping each other learn new skills, Sheds deliver a powerful combination of **“shoulder-to-shoulder”** camaraderie and a sense of purpose. The movement's roots trace back to Australia in the 1980s, before spreading to the UK late in the noughties.

“Sheds are full of mates you never knew you had.”
Colwyn Bay Men's Sheds

What Makes Men's Sheds So Valuable

Building, Belonging and Better Health

Loneliness and isolation are no strangers to many, particularly those transitioning from workplace routines to retirement. Men's Sheds offer a trusted haven to chat, laugh, learn and feel seen. In fact, a UKMSA survey found that **76 % of Shedders reported improved physical health, and 79 % noted better mental wellbeing** [UK Parliament Committees](#).

One Shed even shared how “a man who was walking down to the sea to end his life... turned back, gave it a try, and he’s still here.” Such stories remind us that Sheds can truly save lives.

A Space for Doing and Caring



The joy of building, fixing, restoring or simply tinkering is integral to the Shed experience. Whether it's woodworking, gardening, crafts, tech or just sharing skills, there's space for creativity and connection.

“The Shed has been very good at making me feel part of the team and gives me tasks that I never have thought I was capable of. I have had a sense of being useful restored to me.”
Rolf, Dalbeattie Men's Shed, Scotland

Why This Matters to RBL Members

Why This Matters

As an RBL member, you understand the importance of camaraderie, connection, purpose, and mutual support. Men's Sheds offer another avenue to enrich wellbeing, especially for those navigating life beyond military service, caring roles, or shifts in routine.

The [UKMSA Armed Forces Community Accreditation](#) has now officially launched, giving Sheds the opportunity to formally demonstrate their commitment to welcoming and supporting the Armed Forces Community. Achieving this accreditation also shows that a Shed is willing to collaborate with and support military charities wherever possible, creating trusted spaces where shared experience is valued and celebrated. You can find out more here: Armed Forces Community Accreditation.



Importantly, many Sheds already play a hands-on role in projects that matter deeply to RBL members, from repairing and maintaining memorial benches, to creating poppy displays, supporting the Poppy Appeal, or running intergenerational activities that keep remembrance alive in local communities. These practical acts of service build pride, purpose, and belonging while strengthening ties with the Armed Forces family.

To strengthen this work, UKMSA has recently appointed a dedicated Armed Forces Lead whose role is to grow partnerships, support Sheds in engaging with the Armed Forces community, and ensure that initiatives like the Accreditation and Awards have real impact. His aim is to make sure every Shed that wishes to can confidently welcome those with a service background, while also building strong links with supporting agencies such as the Royal British Legion.

In addition, the annual [UKMSA Awards](#) are open, including the new *Armed Forces Community Shed Award*, proudly sponsored by the Royal British Legion. This award celebrates Sheds that have gone above and beyond in supporting those with Armed Forces backgrounds. We warmly encourage you to nominate any Sheds that have supported you, your community, or someone you know.

To see the difference in action, watch our short film from Shrewsbury Men's Shed on the [UKMSA YouTube channel](#), which highlights the impact a Shed can have for those from the Armed Forces community.

Whether you are Shedders-at-heart, curious to visit, or inspired to help launch the next Shed in your area, there is space, recognition, and a warm welcome waiting for you.

How to Find Your Local Men's Shed

Ready to explore? It's easier than you might think. The **UK Men's Sheds Association** provides a “Find a Shed” tool on their website, just enter your postcode or town to locate nearby spaces and contact details [UKMSA Men's Sheds Association](#).

And if you don't find one, there's good news: you can start your own! UKMSA offers guidance, resources, and support for setting up a new Shed in your community [UKMSA Men's Sheds Association](#).

Get in touch with us!

We're a national organisation with remote staff and volunteers across the country. We don't have an office anywhere but if you need to write to us, you can do so to our virtual office. Our address is UK Men's Sheds Association, 49 Station Road, Polegate, East Sussex, BN26 6EA.

You can also call, email or use our contact form to send us a message.
Our team are normally available between 9am and 2.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Phone: 0300 772 9626

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