

# 5 step guide to a **Men's Shed**

# Introduction



**"Welcome to the ChangeX Men's Sheds guide!  
We're delighted you're thinking about starting a  
shed in your community. Here you'll find all the  
information, practical tips and resources you need.  
There is someone to help you at each stage of the  
journey so don't be afraid to get in touch!"  
John Evoy, Irish Men's Sheds Association**

## Why a Shed?

Men have particular needs and ways of doing things. They like to be productive and to contribute to those around them but they still like to talk and often, to be doing something at the same time.

The Shed is a space for talk and fun. Practical skills and knowledge can be exchanged. Something useful can be going on that will contribute to a local community need, while the participants of the Shed experience an improvement in their own wellbeing by keeping physically, mentally and socially active. There are benefits all round.

## Who is the Shed for?

Men's Sheds are open to all men regardless of age, background or ability. It is a place where you can share your skills and knowledge with others, learn new

skills and develop new friendships. New members are always welcome and can be assured that there is something of interest for everyone, as the men have ownership of the projects and decide their own programme of events.

## Why is this important?

Men in Ireland are more likely to be unemployed and isolated than women; they have poorer health outcomes and are more likely to die from suicide and other preventable causes. They are less likely to talk about their problems or seek help and yet most services are not male friendly. Most men have learned from our culture that they don't talk about feelings and emotions. There has been little encouragement for men to take an interest in their own health and wellbeing.

Because men don't often make a fuss about their problems, these problems have consistently been either ignored or swept under the mat by both our health system and our modern society. It's time for a change and the Men's Shed movement is a powerful tool in helping men to once again become valued and valuable members of our community.

# 5 Steps & Checklist



## 5 STEPS

1. Hold an Information Evening
2. Form A Working Group
3. Visit Other Sheds
4. Find A Suitable Premises
5. Managing / Planning / Registering

## WHO

Someone who...

- ☐ is an inclusive leader
- ☐ is passionate about the ethos and vision of Men's Sheds.
- ☐ has some understanding of community development
- ☐ is willing to link in with the existing network of Men's Sheds

## RESOURCE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Access to a suitable venue
- ☐ A group of interested men
- ☐ Insurance
- ☐ Advertising materials

## TIME



As a leader you'll need approximately 1 day a week to start and maintain a shed in your local community.

# Step 1:

## Hold an Information Meeting

To test the level of interest among local men in getting involved in a Shed, organising an information meeting is a good way to start. You can do this by first talking to a few friends or local people you know will be interested in helping you get started. Once they're on board you can start organising the information meeting.

There are a few things to consider:

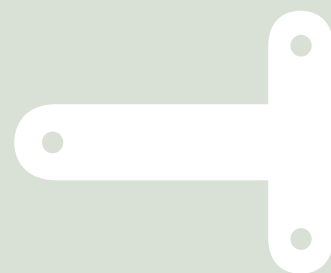
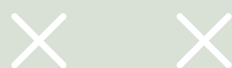
- Location
- Agenda
- Invitations & Advertising
- Running the meeting

### Location

Holding the meeting in a suitable venue is essential (e.g. a local community, church or sports hall could work perfectly) - somewhere that is comfortable and accessible.

### Agenda

Working off an agenda will help you to cover a small number of priority items and give direction to the meeting (see sample Agendas in Appendix 1).



# Step 1:

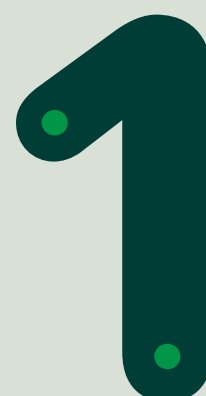
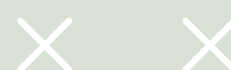
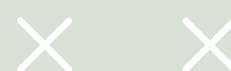
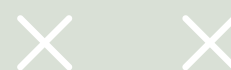
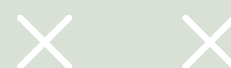
## Hold an Information Meeting

### Advertising & Invitations

Getting the word around is vital. Local radio, parish newsletters, a poster campaign and/or using social media will enable you to reach as broad an audience as possible. Putting flyers through letterboxes and posters in local shops will also help get the word around.

You want to particularly reach men, as well as other local community members and potential businesses and sponsors that might be interested in getting involved. Engaging with men that may be your 'shedders' should be the focus of the first meeting. Choosing a date that does not clash with a major sporting event or another community event is wise!

Some invitations may need to be directed to individuals rather than a scatter-gun approach and then hoping for the best. Where you would like to have local voluntary and statutory groups represented, 'Letters of Invitation' should be addressed to a specific individual rather than using a flyer for this purpose.



# Step 1:

## Hold an Information Meeting

### Running the Meeting

It's important to bill the meeting in terms of 'Would you be interested in setting up and/or being part of a local Men's Shed?' This way you will not over commit yourself and others until the level of initial interest is clear and tangible, people will also feel part of the starting process and will be more willing to help out.

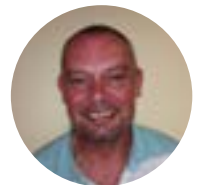
Having a person who is comfortable facilitating the business and process of the meeting will convey confidence to your audience and ensure that good participation happens. You should also have a person to keep notes of the meeting: the issues raised, suggestions made and additional information sought.

Very few people will refuse tea or coffee and something to nibble and it helps people to feel welcome and to mingle with others. So be prepared with some supplies and maybe even home baking to hand!

Be sure to keep an attendance record with contact details including Name, Address, Phone/Mobile and Email address. This information will allow you to keep in touch with people and provide short updates from time to time.

**I'm Gerry and I set up a shed in Athy Co. Kildare... I like going to the men's shed for the company and the craic! there is the banter and divilment lads get up to at work - but replaced at the shed...**

Gerry Walsh,  
Mens Shed, Athy



## CALL



**Give us a call if you have any questions on running your information meeting – we're here to help!**



# Step 2:

## Form a Working Group

After the first meeting hopefully you'll have realised that there is great demand for a shed in your community and a few people should have emerged that can help you out in getting started.

For the Shed to become established a core group of individuals will be needed to get through the early stages of development. Appointing a working group with clearly defined roles and responsibilities ensures that the workload is shared and that a common sense of purpose emerges over time. It is important that the members of the working group remain accountable to the Shed membership at all times.

You may wish to use a different title for the group like a Management or Leadership Committee, whichever you choose, the most important thing is that the purpose, roles and responsibilities are clear to everyone. Individuals could volunteer for these roles, could be nominated and seconded by other members or you could have an election with individuals having a 2 minute slot to explain what each can bring to the work and why anyone should vote for them.

See the sample Roles and Responsibilities of a leadership committee in Appendix 2.

### TIPS



**Your mentor can give you lots of tips & advice on setting up your steering group.**



# Step 3:

## Visit Other Sheds

Once you have a group involved you'll want to figure what type of Shed will best respond to the members' needs. A perfect way to do this is to visit a number of other Sheds. There are now over 200 sheds in Ireland so you should find one relatively closeby. [Find your nearest one here.](#)

Meeting people who have already travelled the road you are setting out on will be very informative and could help you to avoid some potential obstacles along the route.

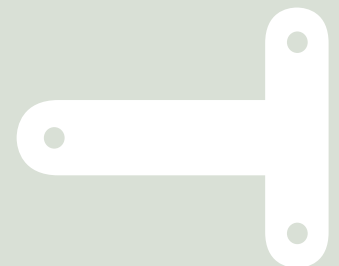
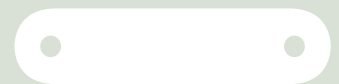
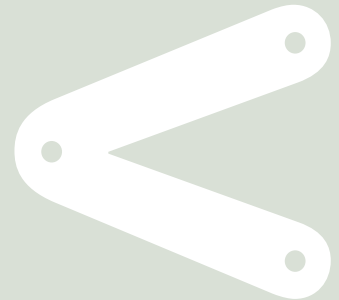
### When you visit a shed what will you see?

You'll see anything from a number of men restoring furniture for an old folks home or putting new life into disused bicycles for a local school, or maybe fixing lawn mowers. You might also see younger and older men learning new skills from each other as well as sharing life experiences. Sheds across the country have all sorts of different activities going on so be inspired, get some ideas and don't be afraid to come up with your own ideas for what you want your shed to be!

**VISIT**



**Call your local shed to arrange  
a visit – let us know if you need  
help from us!**





# Step 4:

## Find a Suitable Premises

To ensure the sustainability of your shed, finding rent-free premises is critical. Most sheds across the country have managed to find one so don't be afraid to start looking!

The most important asset to have when looking for 'a rent free premises' is patience. It is easy to find premises if you are willing to pay commercial levels of rent and the group of men may become disillusioned if suitable premises are not identified quickly. However, it's good to remember that the project you are setting up may last for several years and a little patience and persistence in the early stages may bring immense rewards in the years to come.

Some Sheds have "caretaker agreements" with their landlords where the Men from the Shed look after the building or surrounding area instead of paying rent.

At this stage most of the Sheds in Ireland are in a low or no rent situation. Paying commercial rents for premises is unsustainable for a Men's Shed unless they are in receipt of higher levels of funding support.

**Give us a call if you have any questions on looking for premises – we're here to help!**



# Step 4:

## Find a Suitable Premises

### Insurance

Once you've found a premises, the next issue you'll need to consider is insurance. This might seem like a daunting and complex issue but don't worry the Irish Men's Sheds Association have worked hard to make this as simple and straightforward as possible for its members.

A special arrangement exists with BHP Insurances who have a dedicated team to deal with Men's Sheds. The premium for insuring your Men's Shed depends on the number of your members and the Public Liability Limit of Indemnity required. You can see a full list of premiums below:

Mark Lee in BHP Insurances handles all Men's Shed queries and you can contact him directly on **1890 666 111 / 086 389 7749.**

Sheds pay for insurance in different ways, many fundraise locally and the Irish Men's Sheds Association can give you some guidance on available grants.

Number of Members	Limits of Indemnity	Premiums
0 - 20 Members	€1,300,000	€180
21 - 50 Members	€1,300,000	€315
50 + Members	€1,300,000	€500
0 - 20 Members	€2,600,000	€200
21 - 50 Members	€2,600,000	€350
50 + Members	€2,600,000	€600
0 - 20 Members	€6,500,000	€240
21 - 50 Members	€6,500,000	€430
50 + Members	€6,500,000	€750



# Step 5:

## Planning & Registering

Once you've found your premises and you have a small group of men ready to get started it makes sense for the group to think about the answers to these three questions:

- 1. What are we trying to achieve here and for whom?**
- 2. Why do we wish to do this?**
- 3. How will we go about this work?**

The answers to these questions will shape the running of your shed and inform your mission and vision statement. See some samples in Appendix 3.

### Registering with IMSA

There are over 260 Men's Sheds on the Island and new Sheds are registering with IMSA at the rate of one every week. IMSA's work includes hosting regular events that give the Shedders opportunities to network with each other and share ideas. [Register to get started on ChangeX here](#) and we'll guide you through the IMSA Registration process.

## INFO

**There is a suggested minimum voluntary donation of 25 euro paid to the Men's Sheds Association to accompany the yearly registration.**



# Get in Touch

Now that you know what's involved in setting up a Shed, we hope you're ready to get started!

[Register here to get started](#) and we'll be in touch very soon!

**We hope you found this guide helpful, we'll guide you through the whole process so don't be afraid to get in touch.**

John McEvoy,  
Irish Men's Shed  
Association



# Appendix 1:

## Sample Agendas

### Initial Meeting – Draft Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Explain Purpose of the Meeting.
3. Input or Presentation on 'What is a Men's Shed– values and ethos?'
4. Questions and Answers
5. Establishing a Men's Shed: Who wishes to support the idea and who wished to be a member?
6. Forming a Working or Project Group.
7. Circulate Attendance Sheet for contact details and follow-up
8. Any Other Business (including an agreed date for follow-up meeting in 3/4 weeks).

### Follow-up Public Meeting – Draft Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Agree the Draft Agenda
3. Requirements for Starting a Men's Shed
  - a. Constitution
  - b. Membership
  - c. Shed Steering Group
  - d. Venue
  - e. Insurance
  - f. Sponsorship
  - g. Programme Activities
4. Questions & Answers
5. Next Steps: What's to be done and who will do it?
6. A.O.B.

# Appendix 2:

## The Leadership Committee

### **The duties and responsibilities of the Management or Leadership Committee:**

- Understand the responsibilities of their role and delegated authority of any subcommittees
- Understand and comply with the organisation's governing document (e.g. constitution)
- Understand the organisation's legal structure
- Understand the liabilities upon becoming a Management Committee member
- Provide sound financial oversight and ensure that resources are properly managed
- Ensure that all potential risk is assessed and dealt with
- be able to account for everything the organisation does
- Ensure the organisation pursues its purpose (as defined in the governing document)
- Safeguard the name and values of the organisation
- Take decisions as a collective group
- Hold meetings as necessary to properly fulfil their role
- Seek expert and professional advice when needed.

The Shed will run smoothly and offer a positive experience to all its members and those who come into contact with it if everyone is clear about 'how things should and can be done around here'. In other words, effective management will be supported by a customised Operational Policies and Procedures Manual. These policies and procedures will need to be drafted and approved by the members and would normally encompass:

- Management and Planning
- Financial Management
- Health & Safety
- Maintenance
- Membership Application, Induction and Membership Management
- Communication & Media
- Mentoring & Child Protection
- Dealing with grievances.

The above list is not exhaustive but more a summary of essential policies and procedures. It will be up to each Shed to determine the full range that is needed in each local circumstance.

# Appendix 3:

## Sample Mission Statement

### 1. Mission Statement (What?)

To encourage and support friendship among men, or

To improve the health and well-being of men as active participants in the development of their local community.

### 2. Values (Why?)

Respect, Inclusion, Equality, Open & Healthy Relationships, Teamwork, Accountability and/or Community Participation.

### 3. Aim (How?)

We will provide a safe and welcome meeting place for men to chat, develop friendships, seek support and undertake activities that make best use of their skills and experiences.'