

Start up a Men's Shed with a Cultivate Cambs grant

Men's Sheds are community spaces to meet with others to make and mend, learn new practical skills and share old ones, and to socialise. Men's Sheds come in all shapes and sizes to suit the needs of their members. They can be set up by a new or existing community group, charity, housing association, residential home, or a Parish or Town Council.

Cambridgeshire County Council welcomes [Cultivate Cambs](#) grant applications to set up new Men's Sheds in communities across Cambridgeshire. You can apply for a start-up grant of £2000 over two years for scoping out and developing your Men's Shed.

What is a Men's Shed?

Men's Sheds are workshop spaces where groups of men (and sometimes women) meet to enjoy practical activities such as woodworking, metalworking, electronics, model-making, repairing and restoring. Many Shed groups get involved in community projects too – restoring village features, helping maintain parks and green spaces, building things for schools, libraries, and individuals in need, and running [Repair Cafes](#).

Sheds vary greatly and can be found in purpose-built workshops, warehouses, empty offices, garages, storage sheds, old farm buildings, and Portakabins. Many Shed groups start out with no formal premises and meet regularly to socialise and scope out their plans until they find a suitable space for their tools.

Sheds typically attract older men, but many have a wider membership, and some are called Community Sheds. Each Shed is unique and shaped by its members.

What makes Men's Sheds suitable for this fund?

Older men are more likely to be socially isolated than women and can be less likely to ask for support. Men are attracted to Sheds for the hands-on activities they offer and the camaraderie. But Sheds also provide opportunities for socialising, making new friends, building new connections in the community and creating informal networks of support and information. Membership of a Men's Shed has been shown to improve health and wellbeing, increase independence and offer a sense of purpose for men who are lonely or isolated.

Sheds can be particularly beneficial for older men who are carers, recently retired or bereaved or who are new to the area. Shed membership can:

- Increase community involvement and social networks
- Promote residents' health and well-being
- Improve mental health
- Reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness
- Offer informal learning opportunities
- Prevent carer breakdown
- Improve cognition and dexterity
- Strengthen connections between younger and older members of the community, and also between newcomers and more established residents

What do you need to start a Shed?


- A good understanding of your community:** Setting up a Shed is hard work so before applying for funding you need to work out whether a Shed is needed in your local area, whether it would be successful and how you would engage more vulnerable members of the community. You should also consider what local groups, clubs and community projects already exist in your community. Talk to them about how a Shed could complement and add value to the great work they do. You can also learn more about your community from the Parish and Ward Profiles on Cambridgeshire Insight: <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/>
- People:** Spread the word about Men's Sheds and find out who is interested in helping to set up a Shed or become a Shed member. This can be done through word of mouth, surveys, social media, promotional materials in shops, GP surgeries, libraries and community newsletters or magazines, talking to other community groups and clubs, public meeting or social events.
- A Committee:** A Shed Committee will help to shape a vision for the Shed and share the tasks required to get the Shed started. Visit other Sheds to get inspiration for the types of activities that can be done and the variety of premises that can host a Shed. Most Sheds start by becoming an unincorporated organisation or Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). You will need a constituted legal structure and bank account to apply for grant funding. Support Cambridgeshire can advise on governance and legal structures <https://www.supportcambridgeshire.org.uk/>
- Potential premises:** Survey your area for suitable premises to borrow, lease, or purchase land to build your own Shed. You will need to consider costs, access to toilet facilities and running water (on site or nearby), mains electricity, proximity to neighbours and noise disturbance, public transport access, suitable parking and safety.

What we can provide:

- Start-up Funding:** You can apply for a start-up grant of £2000 over two years to start developing your Men's Shed. Please see the chart below for a guide to costs to help you prepare your grant application. Other funding may be available from your Town or Parish Council, local businesses,

charitable grants, Shed membership or attendance fees, and donations of money, goods or services.

For further funding opportunities please see: <https://www.idoxopen4community.co.uk/supportcamb>

 **Support:** The UK Men’s Sheds Association (UKMSA) can help get you started. They offer ongoing advice and guidance on setting up and running a Shed, such as finding premises, health and safety, and support with fundraising, governance, insurance, risk management and promotion. Your grant will include UKMSA membership.

How much does it cost?

The costs of setting up a new Men’s Shed vary considerably depending on premises costs. These estimated costings are for guidance only.

Item	Description	Annual costs
UK Men’s Sheds Association annual membership fee (compulsory)	Advice and guidance to help you set up and run a shed. Join here	£30 per year Please add to grant application budget.
Insurance	Public Liability, Employers Liability (covers volunteers), Property Damage, Product Liability and Trustee Indemnity. This can vary – and if your project is hosted by an existing organisation, their insurance might be able to be extended to cover Shed activity.	£200 to £700
Leaflets and flyers	Printing of promotional materials to recruit members and promote your Shed.	£175
Volunteer expenses/training	Reimbursement of volunteer expenses and volunteer training (e.g. First Aid).	£200
Premises costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shed lease or purchase • Planning permission fees (if required) • Utilities – heating, electricity and water • Building renovations, decoration and workshop DIY Premises costs vary considerably depending the availability and costs of suitable premises in your area, and whether they need adapting before they are ready for use.	£ variable
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment purchase and maintenance • Health and Safety Protective Equipment Most Sheds start with shared, donated and second hand tools and equipment. Costs rise substantially if specialty tools and equipment are required.	£ variable

What do I need to do next?

Every community is different, so you will need to do some research and scoping to see if starting a Shed is right for you and your community *before* you apply for funding. You will need to provide evidence that there is need in your community, and that you have identified potential premises for your Shed and have plans for Shed sustainability. **UK Men's Sheds Association** offers free advice and guidance to get you started - please contact 0300 772 9626 or admin@ukmsa.org.uk

Pre-application advice is offered by county council officers before each funding round. You will need to make an appointment to discuss your application proposal before submitting. The grant application form and further details about the fund, including application deadlines and pre-application advice appointments, may be found at <https://www.cambscf.org.uk/cultivate-cambs>

Further information and resources:

- **Men's Sheds UK website**
<https://menssheds.org.uk/>
- **Men's Shed's UK Toolkit**
<https://menssheds.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MENS-SHED-TOOLKIT-FOR-UK-1.pdf>
- **RAMSHED (Ramsey Men's Shed) - Inspirational video clip**
<https://youtu.be/-SreufQHiG8>
- **Malden CVS Men's Shed Toolkit** – comprehensive guidance on setting up a new shed
http://www.maldoncvcs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Shed-toolkit_for-web.pdf
- **Westhill & District Men's Shed** – Guide to running a shed <https://westhillmensshed.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/cool-runnings-at-the-Westhill-mens-shed.pdf> and operation manual <https://westhillmensshed.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Westhill-Mens-Shed-WORKSHOP-OPERATIONS-MANUAL-advice-for-other-sheds.pdf>
- **Cambridge Carbon Footprint** - supports the development of Repair Cafes in Cambridgeshire
<https://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/repair-cafes/>
- **Joseph Rowntree Foundation** - Research that supports the development of Men's Sheds and other activities for men: www.jrf.org.uk/publications/loneliness-resource-pack

