

***Briefing***

***Men’s Sheds***

**March 2019**

**Introduction**

Age Scotland welcome the opportunity to brief MSPs in advance of the Members’ Debate on Men’s Sheds in Scotland.

Age Scotland supports the development of strong and vibrant older people’s groups and organisations by providing information, advice, resources and support to assist member groups with the delivery and development of their services and activities. Allowing people to come together on their own terms, and pursue their own goals is key to community development work and it is vital community groups such as Men’s Sheds are supported to develop and tackle loneliness and isolation in way that has a strong local presence, and is developed for and by the people who will benefit from the service.

**Men’s Sheds**

Men shed’s are a place where members can come together to work on range of activities, either individually or as a group, but also where people can pop in for a chat and a coffee, find information about local services and help their local community.

No two sheds are the same, and each shed will reflect the interest of those that use them. Some may have equipment for woodworking and joinery, others may have workbenches where upholstery or repairs take place, other may have an eco theme and be an extension of an allotment, or be in a purpose built building. What all sheds do have in common though, is that friendships are formed, and people can have a chat.

With almost 170 Men’s Sheds in Scotland, they are invaluable resource to communities, helping to provide a positive view of aging and helps to tackle social isolation and loneliness, enhancing members’ wellbeing.

‘The benefit, I say, it’s getting together, socialising with other people, learning new things. I learned new things here, a lot of new things I wouldn’t have attempted to do anything if I didnae come here. I’d be stuck in the house’

–Paul Bertram, Gala Men’s Shed

This positive impact has been evidenced in Age Scotland’s report ‘The Shed Effect.’ Research from the Scottish Men’s Shed Association found that for every £1 spent on the Westhill Men’s Shed in Aberdeenshire, that there was a return of £9.34 in terms of health and social care and community learning outcomes. Men tend not to talk about their feelings or seek help if anything is wrong and a men’s shed can provide information along with safe and secure place where members can work out their problems together and have a laugh.

‘I was in the darkest place ever and, if you’ve ever spoke to anybody in that place, I never thought I would be there and I was in that place, sitting in the house. For somebody that’s worked twelve hours a day, focussed on people, talking to people, encouraging people, making people into managers and, all of a sudden no wantin’ to be daen’ any o’ that. The shed has the feel-good factor, know what I mean? It’s about working together. And I’m used to that. I’m used to doin’ that in the work anyway, getting people to do that, used to helping. Since coming to the shed I’m up decorating the house again. I always liked to do things around the house: anything that needed done, I’ll go and do it. I’m back to my normal self. If something isn’t right, I like to make it nice. I’ve still got underlying health issues going on, that I’m needing to work on at the moment. So, I need to get through them – and then we’ll be fine. They guys in the shed have been brilliant, every single one of them. I don’t know what my long-term future is. I don’t know where. Do I want to go back into work again? I’ve had offers but, I’m not ready yet. This is the best place to be the now to get me back on my feet, and I would recommend it.’

-Eddie O’Donnell, Hamilton Men’s Shed

Each shed is individual, and it takes a huge community effort to establish and maintain a shed. It involves partnership working and support from a range of stakeholders including local councils, NHS, third sector interfaces, and charities such as Age Scotland and the Scottish Men’s Sheds Association.

We encourage MSPs to continue their support for Men’s Sheds and recognise the importance of their contribution to making Scotland a great place to grow older.

***About Age Scotland***

Age Scotland is Scotland’s leading charity advocating on behalf of older people. Our vision is a Scotland where everyone can love later life. Our mission is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people in Scotland can enjoy better later lives.

Age Scotland’s Strategic Aims are to promote positive views of ageing and later life; help older people to be as well as they can be; and to tackle loneliness and isolation.

***For more information:***

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