

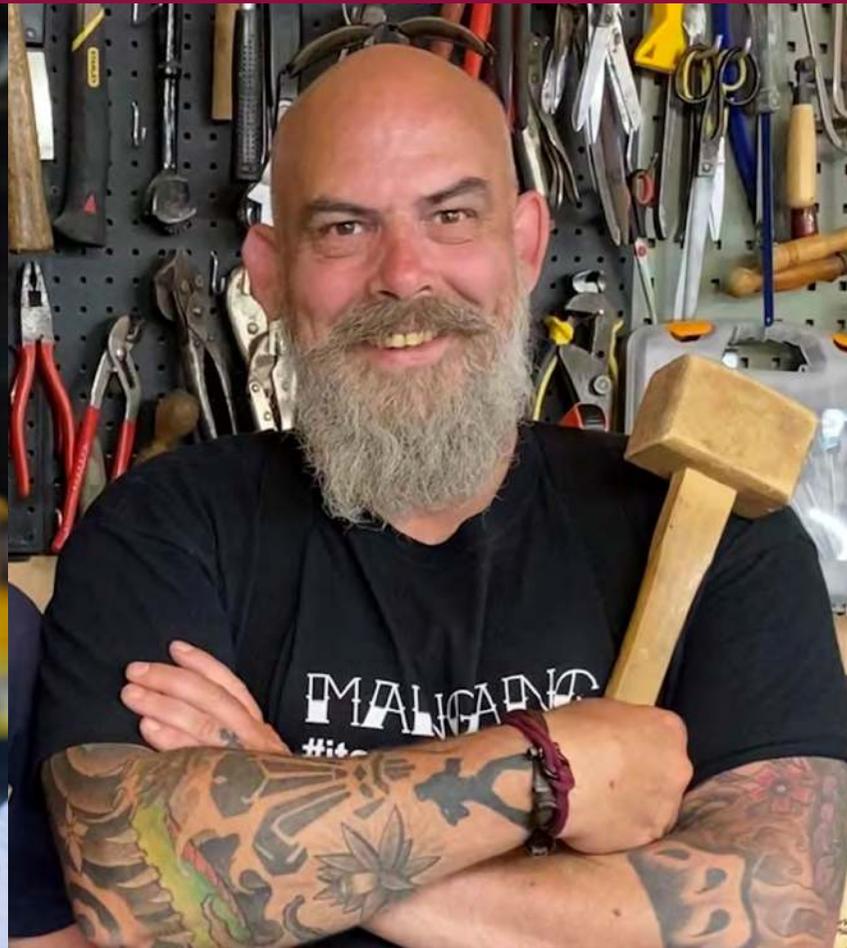
Step The By Men's Shed Model Step

Interreg 
EUROPEAN UNION

2 Seas Mers Zeeën

SBS

European Regional Development Fund



Step The By Men's Shed Model Step

Introduction

What is an SBS Shed?

A Shed is a meeting place for men, regardless of age or background, who wish to share knowledge, experience and comradeship in an informal, no commitment setting. Sheds can take a wide range of forms and operate much like clubs - open to their local community for people with similar interests. Men attending Sheds, or 'Shedders', may simply be there for a cup of tea and a chat, to work on an organised activity such as woodworking, get involved in a new sport or social activity, or to offer services to other community members such as bike repairs. While the structure and purpose of an SBS Shed seems simple, the wider goals include improving Shedders' health, wellbeing and quality of life.

Mutual support is at the centre of the Sheds concept. As active participants rather than clients, men freely come together to create informal, social spaces that encourage interaction and activity. A Shed can promote feelings of purpose, solidarity and empowerment that have knock-on effects on Shedders' health, wellbeing and prospects.

Aim of this document

This document describes the Step by Step (SBS) model of Sheds. SBS Sheds offer a holistic approach to men's wellbeing by bringing men together through shared interests and facilitating opportunities for peer support, health improvement and employment.

The SBS model is inspired by the Men's Shed Movement. It combines welcoming spaces for men with the ethos of overcoming obstacles one step at a time to achieve long term benefits.

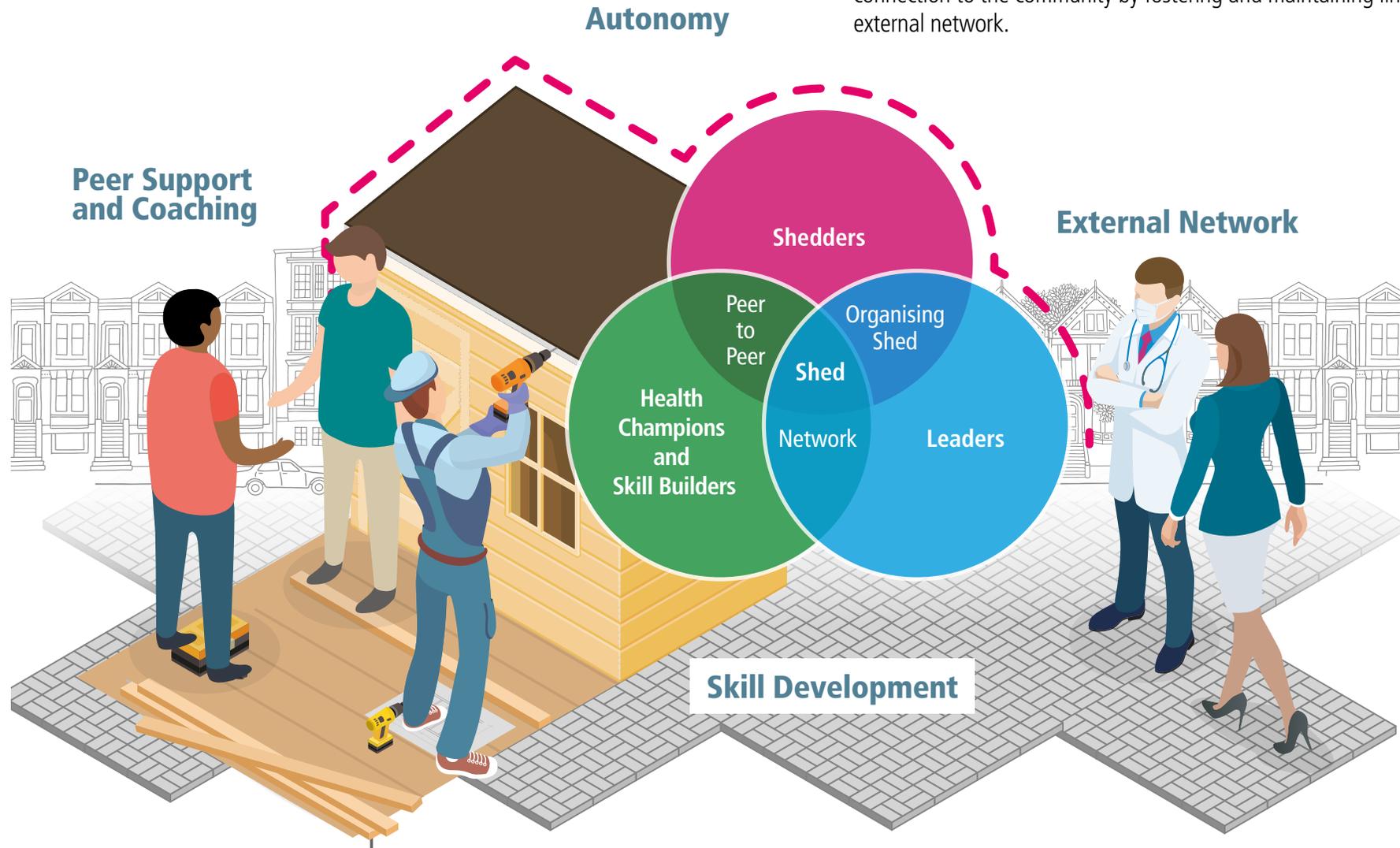
A Shed can be an important place for men who are isolated, unemployed or those who have little access to information about their health.

Men from all backgrounds should be encouraged to set up their own local Shed. As well as providing a place for men to gather and socialise, Sheds are at the centre of the community's wider network of services. While the Shed is an informal and open space, Shedders are also able to access trusted advice on and referral to support for the areas of health, wellbeing, skills building and employment.

The SBS Model

At the core of the SBS Model, Shedders and shed activities are supported by:

- shed autonomy to determine the focus of the shed activities
- coaching and support within the shed offered by fellow shedders
- training and skill development opportunities to equip Shedders to support their own and others physical and mental health and employability
- connection to the community by fostering and maintaining links to the external network.



Autonomy

The SBS model does not create a strict hierarchy of leadership and management that insists on having specific roles. Instead, an SBS Shed should bring together people who contribute to the shared purpose of the Shed, utilising their skills and interest wherever possible. Autonomy and active involvement from all members are regarded as key to running the Sheds.

Sheds can be anywhere a group of men gather regularly for a common activity, be that a physical building or workshop, a sports club, a community hall or other public space.

Shedders

If the Shed is a club, then Shedders are its members. Shedders are typically adult men who want to benefit from the Shed for social or self-improvement reasons. The Shed offers a space where men can take part in practical, creative, active and social activities in a relaxed and informal way. Each SBS Shed's focus of activity is determined by the interest of its members and organisers. This stimulates the autonomy of Shedders by empowering them to choose what they want to pursue, when and how, and how they call on the skills or support of others in the shed. They are the creators and organisers of their own activities and community assets. Being in control, having a purpose, and engaging in meaningful social contact in turn contributes to improved mental wellbeing.

Whilst anyone can join a Shed, this kind of space may be particularly appealing to men who experience loneliness, isolation or depression. However, there is no "model Shedder". In fact, a Shed with Shedders from all walks of life and across generations may flourish the most.

Shedders share skills and knowledge with each other, provide encouragement for their peers and make the Shed a welcoming environment. Within the Shed, organisers (including Shed Leaders) provide leadership for the Shed and make links into the local community networks. Specific training is available for some Shedders to become champions in either health or employment skills to bring additional knowledge and skills into their Sheds.

Shed Leaders and Organisers

In order to maintain autonomy, it is important that those who coordinate and manage the operation of the Sheds are Shedders themselves.

All sheds lead Leaders. Leadership is not about being the manager or the boss. It is more about being an advocate for the Shedders. Good leaders are people who know their communities well and have the time and passion to get things done. The most effective sheds will have several leaders all working together and will encourage other members to step up rather than take on all the responsibility themselves. In areas with no local history of Sheds, a higher degree of community organisation may be needed - it is quite possible you have a future Shed leader already in the community who just needs a bit of help, support and encouragement to get things started.

Whilst not everyone possesses the necessary skills or desire to run a Shed, some Shedders and community members have useful experiences, connections and skills that they could contribute to the organisation and day-to-day running of the Shed. This may include personal connections with the local media, a technical skill that can be passed on to fellow Shedders, or simply a surplus of free time in which they can clean or renovate the Shed space.

The Shed leadership team may be responsible for:

- Finding and maintaining the physical space for the Shed
- Connecting with the community to find and attract potential Shedders
- Coordinating the activities that happen within the Shed
- Coordinating volunteers who wish to help in the running of the Shed
- To build lasting relationships with third-party actors in the fields of health and employment

Funding the shed

Finding funding to run a Shed can be a challenge that is dependent on what is available locally. Ideally, established Sheds will run like voluntary organisations, receiving a combination of money and in-kind donations from public and private entities, topped up with contributions from shedders or income generated from projects undertaken within the Shed for the community. In this sense, creating an external network around the Shed and having a visible profile in the community is essential. The concept of autonomy must also remain central: while the Shed is at the centre of a network, the Shed remains in the control of the Shedders.

Financial and legal requirements

As Sheds should be self-managing, the SBS model requires one or more members of the organising team to have some financial and legal knowledge in order to remain safe spaces for Shedders. This includes health and safety, data protection and insurance matters. However, the SBS Sheds Model does not wish to create a bureaucratic burden, simply to enable Sheds to be self-sufficient and able to operate responsibly and within the law. Shed leaders should have access to local training or skills development opportunities in order to manage their Sheds responsibly.

Physical space and resources

A Shed can take place anywhere as long as it is safe and accessible. A good starting point for new Sheds may be a community centre or village hall. Wherever a Shed is located, it is important to consider where equipment such as tools or IT, materials and refreshments will come from, and where they will be kept safely when the shed is not open. While all members of the Shed are responsible for looking after the physical space and resources, ultimately the Shed organisers will handle matters relating to space and resources.

Finding and attracting shedders

Building an external network of contacts and being based within the local community will help men to learn about the Shed through word-of-mouth. A personal recommendation from an existing Shedder is a great way to attract new members. However, organisers may have to do more to attract certain potential shedders, such as socially isolated people.

This may involve volunteering time and effort to mobilise the community, for example through leaflets and posters, or going door to door to tell local people about the Shed. Social media or phone calls can be options to advertise and also to remind Shedders of the activities.

It could also involve going to different locations or community events to raise awareness of the Shed and meet potential Shedders; or to meet new partner organisations who may have connections with potential Shedders to encourage them to refer these individuals to the Shed.

Ultimately, every Shed will need to be aware of the importance of reaching out to men and find their own way of connecting with their communities and potential Shedders.



Peer support and skill development

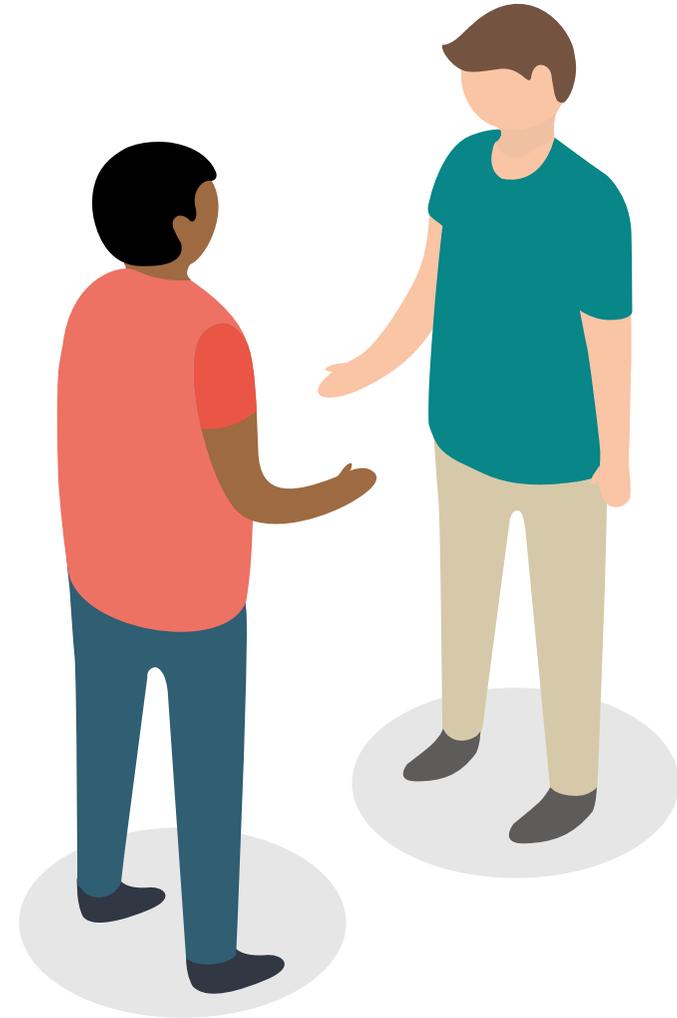
The SBS Model promotes peer support among Shedders as a way for men to improve their physical health and mental wellbeing. It is different from traditional counselling or therapy and more focused on what people can do for each other, rather than what they can't do. It enables Shedders to help others, while also improving their own wellbeing. It is also a good way of connecting with people who experience the same or similar issues, fears or enthusiasm.

Peer support is not designed to replace professional services. Instead, creating a supportive environment between peers enables individuals to seek professional or medical help earlier and is key to improving health in the long term.

Men tend to use healthcare services less frequently than women, or put off seeing a doctor until their condition gets worse making it harder to prevent or treat long term illnesses such as heart disease. Studies also show that long-term unemployment, precarious employment, chronic exposure to occupational hazards and stressful working environments have a negative impact on health and wellbeing. The SBS model tackles mental health, physical health and employment using a holistic approach.

Skill Share

Shedders with special knowledge, skills or experience can share what they know within the Shed in an informal and supportive manner. Support provided from a peer, rather than via a formal classroom, allows Shedders to slowly build practical skills, at their own pace, and in a way that improves their confidence and wellbeing. No training is necessary, just a willingness to share existing skills and knowledge.



Champions

While all Sheddars will be able to benefit simply by taking part in Shed activities, some may need a bit of extra encouragement to make bigger life changes or take steps towards taking better care of their health. The SBS Model of Sheds includes an additional health and employability aspect, offering a number of opportunities for Sheddars to step-up and develop their skills to support fellow shedders in a social, semi-formal manner.

Health Champions

Health Champions are trained Sheddars who offer support to fellow Sheddars through healthy conversations. No previous experience is necessary, just an interest in helping people improve their health and an ability to look after their own health and wellbeing.

Health Champions receive training in healthy conversation skills and support to help them gain confidence in talking to Sheddars about health and wellbeing. The primary role of the Health Champion is to facilitate conversations with their peers and signpost to other services if needed. They act as a link between local health services and the Sheds, to ensure Sheddars can improve their physical and mental strength and fitness.

Trained Health Champions will bring this higher level of awareness of health and wellbeing to their Sheds and their communities, creating an environment where men are able to talk about health issues in a sensitive, productive way. Men should feel more comfortable talking to someone in confidence, knowing that they won't be judged or be given dubious advice, and that they won't be told what to do. More information on Health Champions and training is available in our dedicated Health Champion Programme guide.

Skill Builders

Good employment or a sense of purpose promotes wellbeing and better health among men. The SBS Model incorporates all three aspects into a holistic model. The employment aspect of the Model includes intergeneration skill exchange among Sheddars, links into local training and development offers to meet specific shedder needs, and holistic informal coaching for those Sheddars who need extra support to gain employability skills and confidence.

While employability and skills development is integral to the design of an SBS Shed, the SBS model also includes trained Skill Builders. Skill Builders are Sheddars who understand the impact good employment and working towards goals can have on an individual, and have basic coaching skills to help people make and achieve new goals.

Having Skill Builders within a Shed can be particularly helpful for those who have been unemployed for a long time, or people who lack the confidence or desire to go to a formal employment advisor.

More information about the employment model is available in our dedicated Employment and Skill Development guide.



External Network

Another key element of the SBS Model is the external network that supports the Shed. This includes building strong relations with public, private and third-sector organisations.

A shed can strengthen the community by having a shared vision, created by the Shedders and reflecting their community's needs. By being active in the community, the Shed becomes an asset shared by many rather than a group of people working in isolation.

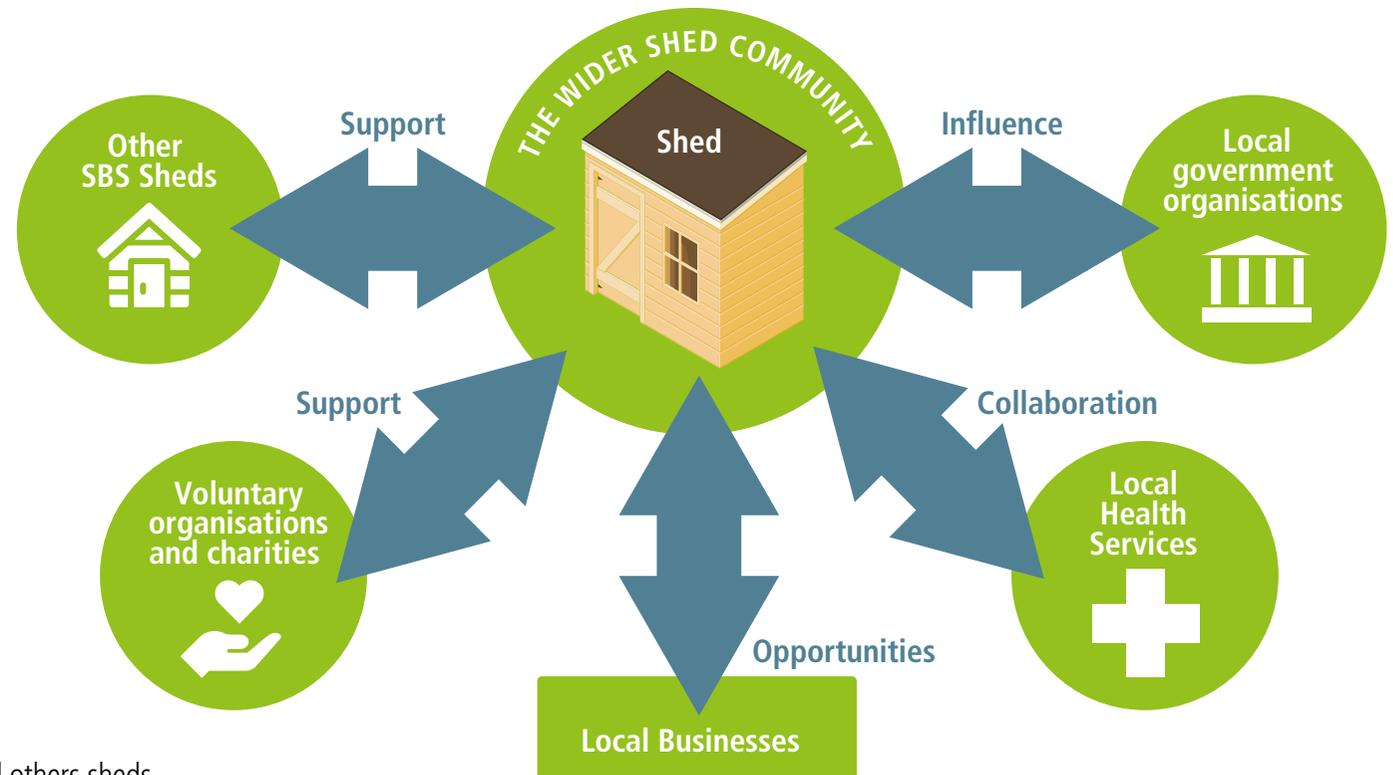
Purpose of the network

Being part of a wider network helps to:

- Signpost Shedders who may have specific social, health or economic goals to external organisations
- Host workshops or activities within the shed, drawing on local expertise
- Encourage potential Shedders to join the Shed
- To find and access local training offers
- Encourage collaboration between organisations and others sheds

The exact network will vary between Sheds and influenced by the local context and local needs. There are many types of organisations, including local authorities and health services, that are interested in building relationships with local Sheds to help improve health outcomes.

However the external network is formed, it must be driven by the Shed itself and should not reduce the autonomy or power of the Shed to meet their community's needs.



Review of SBS Model

In the winter of 2020-21, SBS Shed Leaders and Shedders were involved in a review of the SBS Model. Using a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) Analysis Shed Leaders and Shedders were encouraged to reflect on how the model has been working in practice within their sheds. A common view by those involved was that the SBS Model itself was very attractive to men and they supported the wider model around health and wellbeing.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Shed enhancements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive atmosphere; facilities• Increased opportunities for future plans• Provides greater structure to shed• Emphasis on training <p>Shed membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committed volunteers• Increasing membership• Intergenerational members <p>Group togetherness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preventing isolation, supporting problems• Opportunities to mix socially <p>Encourages a learning environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning new skills• Learning through activity and from others• Interpersonal skills (empathy development)• Employment emphasis <p>External community networking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication with organisations <p>Holistic coaching - health improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical, Psychological and mental health• Lifestyle changes• Improved self-confidence• Increased emphasis on men's health <p>Wider awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fake news• How employment affects health• Strengths - Recognition of own talents <p>Health champions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health conversations• Health checks• Adds a focus to conversations	<p>Shed facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Size of space• Ability to grow within the space available• Lack of equipment <p>Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retention of members• Managing expectations of new members• Inclusivity• Engagement via digital conferencing• Balancing competing needs <p>Shed management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk of short-term planning• Trying to do too much too quickly <p>Holistic coaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouraging health checks• Members with complex needs• Accommodating members with serious problems• Setting boundaries of help <p>Health champions course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training needs to address complexity of issues• Needs to address not fixing people

Opportunities	Threats
<p>Shed growth and development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability • New Sheds • Financial independence • Shed layout • Link activities together <p>Enhance connections – community integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral pathways with the community • Share knowledge with the community • Linking shed with other men’s groups <p>Promotion of the Shed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet new people • Recruiting new Sheddors • Events in the community • Learning about men <p>Skill sharing with community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shed workshops in community • Externally led courses in Shed • Creating a directory of speakers <p>Additions to Training Offered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group dynamics – working in teams • Dealing with complex health issues <p>Model Simplification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A simplified model would be easier to communicate 	<p>Shed Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging volunteers to be leaders • Knowing who is responsible for what? <p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of low numbers to closure • Achieving financial independence • Maintaining hire of premises <p>Managing shedder’s expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivating them not to abandon projects at first hurdle • Poor internal communication • Reading level of documentation used • Strong characters impacting other shedder experiences <p>Connection with External Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation of inclusion of people with complex needs. • Community facilitator role is important • Network of support lost during pandemic <p>COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core focus over last 18 months – future uncertainty • Shed post-pandemic resilience, relevance and momentum

The second part of this review was to use the above information to look at potential strategies to enhance the SBS Model. These have been incorporated into the final SBS Model presented in this document.

Using SBS Strengths to realise Opportunities	Using SBS Strengths to address Threats
<p>Bringing men together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables the discussion on the wider health issues • Enables other discussions (not health related) and strengthens connections <p>Leadership to recognise the opportunities and then be able to realise them</p> <p>Improve multifaceted skill set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helps increase self-esteem and health benefits 	<p>Strong leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and any severely threatening situation • To help gain premises by demonstrating commitment to potential landlords <p>A sense of commitment from all can help manage stronger personalities</p> <p>Being part of community projects can help assist with getting funding and connecting to the external network</p>
Improve weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities.	Working to eliminate weaknesses to avoid threats
<p>Using the wider community to help look for new premises</p> <p>Using the wider community to find members</p> <p>Emphasising the opportunities to learn new skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to build membership • Shed able to host equipment that Members cannot keep at home 	<p>Strong leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deal with threats, issues, and compliance <p>All members have a say in the Shed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution via drawing out the skills/experiences of the Shed as a whole <p>Open/regular communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of media • Inter-Shed networking <p>Make SBS clearer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build resilience alongside other men’s organisations • Become recognised as being a part of a unique network • Utilise experience of networking and help others do the same • Ongoing contact with necessary partners to share knowledge

From the review, it is clear that all elements of the existing model have relevance and are being used within the SBS Sheds. The SWOT review identified four key strategies for success:

Strong leadership – whilst the Model has suggested that there is no hierarchy of status within the Shed, Shedders have identified the benefit of clear roles and responsibilities to ensure the smooth running of the Shed. There is recognition of how to identify leaders from within members and also the need to be open and democratic in decision making.

Training – wider or additional training that reflects the particular needs of Shedders i.e. male health issues, complex health needs, working in teams, leadership skills.

External network links – this element of the Model was clearly seen as integral to the running and sustainability of the Shed and maintaining active and open relationships with a variety of external organisations was seen as important. Shedders felt that more discussion was needed when organisations referred new members to the Shed (particularly those with complex needs).

Emphasis on external facing activities – Shedders saw the reciprocal benefits of hosting activities within and for community groups to enhance the position of the Shed within their community and thereby support the Shed's future.



About Step by Step (SBS)

Step by Step (SBS) is a collaboration between 10 organisations to develop and test a new model of community mental and physical health improvement for men.

The model has been designed to

- Empower men to move from poor health and/or isolation to healthy social participation or active engagement in the labour market.
- Promote a culture in which all citizens in all regions will have the confidence to make sustainable positive changes in their lives benefitting themselves & society.
- Contribute to healthier individuals, families, communities & workforces

The SBS model's primary aim is to engage with men in their local communities, particularly those who may be socially isolated and suffering from poor mental health or poor wellbeing.

For more information and to find your local partner visit www.sbs-wellbeing.eu

About Interreg

Interreg 2 Seas 2014 -2020 is an EU programme facilitating cross-border cooperation between England, France, the Netherlands and Belgium.

SBS has been funded as part of the programme's technological and social innovation priority. SBS's specific objective is to increase the development of social innovation applications to make more efficient and effective local services.

Step The By Men's Shed Model Step

October 2021

