

UK Men's Sheds Association launches new guide to help communities set up Men's Sheds in shipping containers

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The UK Men's Sheds Association (UKMSA) has launched a free practical guide to help communities across the UK establish Men's Sheds using shipping containers - a flexible, affordable and increasingly popular solution for creating safe workshop and social spaces for men.

Men's Sheds play a vital role in tackling loneliness and social isolation, particularly among older men and those experiencing life changes such as retirement, bereavement or poor health. By providing shared spaces where men can connect, learn skills and support one another, Sheds contribute positively to mental health, suicide prevention, alcohol moderation and community wellbeing.

With community premises hard to come by in many areas of the UK, the new publication, *Shipping Container Set Up for Sheds*, draws on real-world experience from Men's Sheds currently operating in containers, including detailed case studies from Amersham and Wendover Men's Sheds. As of December 2025, at least 27 Men's Sheds across the UK are using shipping containers as their main workshop space.

"The container didn't just solve our space issue - it gave our members a meaningful project. Refitting it ourselves created purpose, teamwork and real pride. The finished workshop represents not just a building, but the confidence and skills gained along the way," said John Latchford of Amersham Men's Shed in Buckinghamshire.

Shipping containers offer a quick and cost-effective way for new and developing Sheds to get started, particularly where permanent buildings are not viable. They are secure, weather-resistant, portable, and can be adapted for workshops, social spaces, storage and off-grid use.

The guide covers every stage of the process, including:

- Planning, access and foundations
- Power, lighting and ventilation
- Health and safety, insurance and regulatory considerations
- Workshop layout and future expansion
- Insulation, noise control and dust management
- Real case studies and practical lessons learned

The guide also highlights how container-based Sheds can grow over time, with examples of modular expansion, outdoor covered workspaces and renewable energy solutions.

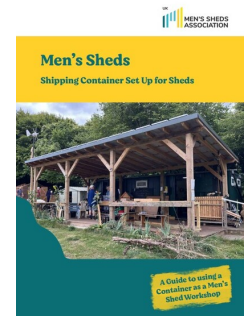
By sharing practical advice and honest insights from experienced Sheds, UKMSA aims to reduce barriers for communities looking to create welcoming spaces that support men's health, wellbeing and social connection.

"Shipping containers have enabled many Sheds to get up and running quickly and safely, often in places where no other option existed," said Rachel Meadows, head of development at UKMSA. "This guide brings together the collective knowledge of Sheddors who've already done it, helping others avoid common pitfalls and make informed decisions."

The Shipping Container Set Up for Sheds guide is aimed at community groups, local authorities, funders and anyone interested in developing a Men's Shed. It is available now at <https://menssheds.org.uk/mens-sheds-resources/>

For more information on starting up a Men's Shed visit <https://menssheds.org.uk/start-a-shed/>

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