

Futures and Foresight for the Post Covid Era by Virtual Action Learning

Organisations in the UK and around the world are facing a significant future of uncertainty which is likely to continue for several months if not years. The Covid 19 Epidemic is already resulting in new ways of living and working. This dynamic will continue to unfold. The anticipation of the future will play an important role in the safeguarding and improvement of organisations. Futures and Foresight is the interdisciplinary study of the future, drawing on a range of methods and techniques that allow consideration of possible, plausible, probable, preferable and potentially creatable long term futures. However, since the future is unpredictable, the purpose of futures and foresight is not and cannot be the prediction of the future, but rather its assistance to the decision-making process in forming strategy. Further, this needs to happen on a continuous basis

Our approach will be to offer Futures and Foresight through Virtual Action Learning or VAL. This means we can offer an ongoing learning process using social media technology such as Skype, MS Teams, Zoom or other media to groups who are located anywhere in the World.

We can work with groups from 4 to 8 people who are connected to us by the selected social media.

1. At the first meeting, for one hour, the key themes for the future – up to 5 years ahead – will be considered, leading to setting a futures questions for further deliberation and action in terms of revealing key patterns and trends both pre-Covid 19 and since. A cloud-based support area containing key material will be provided.
2. Over the next 10 weeks, the group will convene again via the social media to review actions taken so that learning can be articulated and lessons for the present strategy and decision making can be considered. This pattern of working with futures and foresight to find actions for the present is key feature of its value.
3. We will deepen the process as we continue to consider surprise issue and those issues considered very unlikely but still possible, such as further epidemics and geo-political-climatic consequences.
4. The group will review progress and determine how their work needs to be disseminated and impact on decision-making.

This approach to learning futures and foresight has been tried and tested and always results in learning for the present, often in new and challenging ways. It is an essential feature of coping with uncertainty and unpredictability.