

Futures and Foresight 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 year. The anticipation of the future can play an important role in the safeguarding and improvement of an organisation. Futures and Foresight is the interdisciplinary study of the future, drawing on a 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 or 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 10 years ahead – will be considered, leading to setting a futures question for further deliberation and action in terms of revealing key patterns and trends. A cloud-based support area containing key material will be provided.
2. After an appropriate interval – 4-7 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. A further tool of futures and foresight will then be introduced and applied. Actions will be determined.
4. The process is repeated 4 more times and on each occasion further tools of futures and foresight will introduced and applied.
5. 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.