

Rapid Review – Feedback from services on the way ahead

Early this week, beginning Monday 27th April 2020, Irene Audain, SOSCN CEO, wrote a blog reflecting on the current situation and the potential impact on both the medium and longer-terms for OSC in Scotland. If social distancing were to last for a considerable period of time- how could OSC look and operate? Irene shared some thoughts and encouraged service staff to contact her with their ideas. This will be circulated again in a membership newsletter soon, so more replies may come in then.

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The blog also ties in with another ongoing project to capture “Stories from the frontline” for those services providing a childcare HUB for keyworkers and vulnerable children.

<https://soscn.org/blog/reflections-on-our-journey-and-the-way-ahead>

“Stories from the Frontline”: https://soscn.org/news/news_75

For the moment scanning the content of the narrative email responses from 8 service managers, three operating Hubs, and the others using some of the various means to keep afloat, many people are not yet at the stage of looking to the changes that will be needed in the near or longer term future, but a few are, and we know this will increase over time.

(Areas covered include Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, North Lanarkshire, Dunbar and Renfrewshire).

To quote one responder:

“Morning Irene,
Thanks for your email and your blog certainly made me think.
I realise that I was just assuming everything would be back to normal come August but of course nothing will be the same again.
Not all bad though as there will be lots of good things to come out of this.”

“I have sent the link to your thoughts to all the team and asked them to list the threats and then we will come up with solutions so thank you for making us think of the future.”

There are some highly detailed, thoughtful and innovative ideas from the service leaders who got in touch, whether they concluded they can open, or not, or are still too unsure. Their views are valuable in looking not just at the short- term future changes possible, but also towards what in terms of the 3 Horizons analytical approach¹ is the third horizon, the potential for transformational positive change, as we seek a fairer and kinder society through the other side of this pandemic.

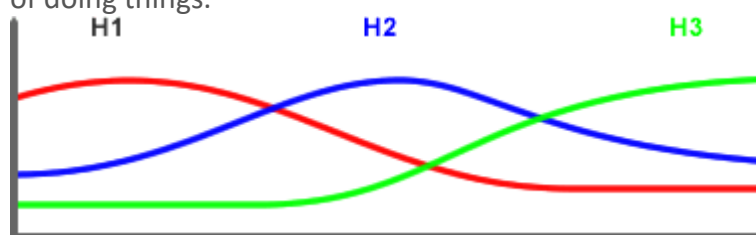
¹ <https://collectiveleadershipscotland.com/week-1-2-three-horizons/>

To better value, reward and empower those, usually in part time low paid work, who provide loving, consistent care to Scotland's children of school age, when not at school, has to be part of this wider transformation.

The Three Horizons model: International Futures Forum Explanation

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"The first horizon - H1 - is the dominant system at present or before the current world crisis. It represents 'business as usual'. As the world changes, so aspects of business as usual begin to feel out of place or no longer fit for purpose. In the end 'business as usual' is superseded by new ways of doing things.



Innovation has started already in light of the apparent shortcomings of the first horizon system.

This forms a second horizon - H2. At some point the innovations become more effective than the original system – this is a point of disruption and potential positive change. Meanwhile, there are other innovations happening already that today look way off beam. This is fringe activity. It feels like it is a long way from H1, based on fundamentally different premises.

This is the third horizon - H3. It is the long-term successor to business as usual – the radical innovation that introduces a completely new way of doing things. "

<https://www.internationalfuturesforum.com/three-horizons>

Reporting on the current situation – focus on the present and how to get back to business as usual

Like many current responses to the pandemic, service managers, of operating or paused services, are in what the 3Horizons approach² describe as the Horizon 1 level – managerial, focusing on retaining and returning to the way things were before the pandemic. Some email responses, at first, focused on the need to come out of lockdown in order to ensure they still exist as a service and as a business:

"We feel it is vital that after-school provision can return as soon as possible. Obviously, measures will need to be put in place to ensure the safety of children and staff but unless there is a way

² <https://collectiveleadershipscotland.com/week-1-2-three-horizons/> please note this analytic tool is used loosely here and there is no "judgement" involved in identifying which of the three horizons are covered in the email responses to the issues. Anyone operating a HUB is entrepreneurial as they are a new, creative response. The link to the information explains categories more as we all work towards a vision of a better future.

forward quickly then many services will be unable to re-open due to the dire situation - ourselves included.

The lack of support for the sector has been really hard. We have been asked by our local council to volunteer as a service to help operate the local hub for key workers but obviously with no payment."

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"I am in the throes of offering current users of xxxx their requested sessions for next year and now that I have slotted in all their changes there are no available later sessions (up till 6pm) for any of the new P1s (including siblings).

We rely so much on tennis and Spanish to offer the children alternative activities and if these are not able to go ahead then we could be in deep trouble. A lot of the parents would then look elsewhere for childcare and I could be looking at reducing the staff team."

"We are based in xxxxx and use church premises to provide ASC for up to 80 children a day from both premises. We have been Zoom chatting amongst our senior staff about how this is unlikely to be a model that we can sustain given what government requirements will most likely be for safety with numbers. It's difficult to imagine how we will manage this. We are very fortunate that our parents have been hugely supportive and those that can are continuing to pay a percentage of their normal monthly fees to keep us going. "

Current Innovation

Those services which have been continuing as part of HUB childcare for Keyworkers and vulnerable children, and at least one which has a high number of key NHS parents, are those which , in terms of the 3 Horizons approach, make up part of the second horizon, which is:

"a pattern of transition activities and innovations, people trying things out in response to the ways in which the landscape is changing. Its quality is entrepreneurial." ³

Some examples from the correspondence from service leaders include:

"Looking at Scandinavian models our forest kindergarten has been a god send for activities in the open. Our staff will work in groups of 6 with one staff member taking over the responsibility for their group throughout the time we are still social distancing. This includes snack and indoor and outdoor activities."

"Our size has been an asset to keep school hubs going and I negotiated favourable terms with councils to subsidise. This meets everyone's needs.

I am not saying it has been easy and I did have to knock on a few MP's doors as well. The children in the hubs have a brighter outlook than the children at home from what we are seeing. We are hoping at least to be able to weather this storm by being proactive as we can."

³ Ibid

"We had one week with just 4 key worker children and it was great in terms of focused supportive work, but we were constantly having to remind them re the need for social distancing. "

Addressing the potential issues:

Again, in terms of the 3 Horizons approach, at this stage many of the responders, often demonstrating step by step consideration of the issues, fully acknowledge that their current operating model, in the first Horizon, does not work for children social distancing. Those currently still in operation, in the second, innovative, Horizon, are more optimistic about finding solutions, while those closed and in fear of their service future survival are far more pessimistic. They have genuine reasons for this, as they explored all the adaptations needed, and concluded it was not possible with their model or to keep their play ethos.

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The blog gave a "starter for 10" of what the issues might be based on SOSCN's own expertise and knowledge of out of school care, these are:

What do we need to do provide a decent service?

1. Funding... first...
2. Bigger spaced premises? In order to form into smaller, distanced groups, as a routine plan.
3. Ability to work with smaller groups of children, to save cross transmission and to build important attachment and secure relationships...
4. Less use of sand, water, and activities which involve too much handling of materials which are hard to keep clean.
5. More use of the arts and music, physical games that do not involve too much touch.
6. Direct supplies of food and ensuring connection with all, through internet and devices
7. Small groups across bigger spaces including outdoors? So, more staff? On rotas to prevent virus overload (children can transmit without symptoms), and of course, testing where required. And more testing as the system improves.
8. Priority to vulnerable children in need and keyworkers to give those doing this now a break? In terms of teachers and many of you needing to take time off in the summer.
9. Remembering children need consistent care and attachment relationships too...you know your children well...
10. Handwashing stations and PPE where required, and swift action from regulators to allow this work to happen, in new indoor and outdoor spaces.

In terms of the responses 1,2,3, 7, 9 and 10 elicited more discussion of the issues and potential solutions, with more confidence expressed in terms of activities, arts music, games, food and the fact there is already priority to vulnerable children and keyworkers.

The biggest issue was in funding, in addressing how to pay for a transformed service operating with social distancing, with smaller numbers, more staff, but a lot less fee income. For some, even exploring possibilities there, concluding that in a play setting, social distancing would be too difficult to do.

Therefore, we really need to find and share the success stories of the HUBs operating with social distancing and extra hygiene methods now. Guidance, such as the Scottish Government videos with the National Clinical Director, Jason Leitch, addressing those delivering childcare now, are also useful and may help services look again at what might be possible.

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Right now the majority of services are on pause, and naturally wondering how and when they can provide for their children and families again, so these initial thoughts from some service leaders will hopefully help us all to think and reflect on the vision we want for the new future of out of school care, both in the short and long term.

We teach trauma informed practice in out of school care, and every single service, holiday club, breakfast club and after school, will be part of the healing fabric of the new Scotland to help heal and care for children and families in the short, and long term aftermath, of all this.

Thank you to the service leaders and their staff teams for sending in detailed and well considered thoughts, and we will collate more as they come in and share this with the out of school care policy team on your behalf.

Do read the appendix 1 below for reflections on your own views, on the future out of school care and hopefully, a bit of inspiration and connection with each other too. Appendix 2 is a one page extract, lifted from the International Futures Forum, on the 3 Horizons model for more information.

Irene Audain, SOSCN, 29th April 2020

Appendix 1: Thematic quotes from 8 service leaders:

Funding:

"When schools return, it sounds like children will attend different days on perhaps a rota basis? This reduces the numbers for us which will help with distancing...but also reduces the income. This reduction in income would have a knock-on effect on being able to keep all staff employed. But this all depends if furloughing will be further extended?"

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Like you say, we are a very adaptive sector....it just feels a bit overwhelming when trying to operate safely while generating enough income.

Many thanks again for all your work for us and take care 😊"

"However, if we do open, we would need funding from xxxxxx City Council/Scottish Government or some other funding, if the free hubs are still available to families of key workers as it would not be financially feasible for us to open for a small number of children who normally attend our provision. As staff are furloughed at the moment, we are at least able to claim wages back from the government, but if we open, we will be unable to pay staff wages with a small amount of fees coming in. This would be detrimental to staff, families and the provision. As it is, we are just managing to keep our heads above water. So essentially, we will not open unless schools are open as normal, and fees being paid, or funding is provided to support us and families to take the provision forward while schools are on a restricted timetable"

"Ultimately, funding is essential for services to be able to operate with a higher staff costs and possibly children who are not already registered with the service, including vulnerable children. Working across the school to provide care for all."

"As a private provider I have high overhead costs with renting church premises. We are unable to base ourselves on our school premises due to the lack of accommodation at the school. It's an open plan school with limited space.

This financial burden with rent means I have to generate enough income to cover rental costs as well as all other overhead costs of running the organisation. I may be in the minority here in xxxxx with this type of model as most ASC's at least have a proportion of their services based on school premises. The upshot is I need the numbers of children to generate enough income to cover all these costs. I started my service in 2002 and it has taken me 18 years to build it up to the service it is today. "

"We will need funding support going forward until we reach some sort of "normal". The current parent group are statistically likely to not all retain their jobs so we will likely have fewer children but still need to provide a service to 4 schools. Furlough or similar scheme will be needed."

Social Distancing solutions and issues raised

"Looking at Scandinavian models our forest kindergarten has been a god send for activities in the open. Our staff will work in groups of 6 with one staff member taking over the responsibility for their group throughout the time we are still social distancing. This includes snack and indoor and outdoor activities.

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If we have children with ASN then the ratios will change accordingly. Each group will be assigned dedicated space both indoors and outdoors"

"Our premises are a community room within the school which will not be large enough to cater for 30 children with social distancing measures. We would need another room within the school building or other premises that we could operate from safely, for both children and staff (possibly the gym hall).

This would also have a knock-on effect for staff costings as more staff would be needed to cover the extra room and allow for a rota to reduce the time at work for staff.

In the school we are based in, there is open spaces where children can enjoy activities, keeping safe distances and for staff to ensure children can play games where they do not touch, maintaining their and staff's safety. But again, extra staff would be needed to ensure separation of groups."

"If children resume school on a rota basis i.e., afternoon or morning rotation. We could look at the possibility of offering morning care/after school care to these children.

Flexibility would be required from the school and Care Inspectorate regarding temporary operating hours during Covid crisis. Greater flexibility would enable us to operate the service when it was needed if schools do not return to a normal school day initially. Also, would prevent further financial loss.

Splitting our existing group of children into smaller groups of 10/15 within a session. We have several spaces within the school and externally that we can use thus reducing the risk/numbers.

We operate from a really large dining hall so spacing would be relatively easy.

Visual indicators could be added to internal setting to guide children. For example, taping off areas, marking seats and leaving space between seats etc. More outdoor play
Guidance on play areas, clearly marking how many children can be in any one area at a time to ensure appropriate distancing. "

"Staff could not keep a 2m distance from children in an ASC environment as it's just not realistic. It's not a school environment where it can be structured to manage social distancing as it's a far more fluid environment. For my provision children travel by walking bus to our premises in groups with my staff. It's therefore hard to imagine how children can be transported safely managing social distancing or is this relaxed outside. How will schools manage rest breaks for

children in the playground? My provision uses the local public play-parks and It's therefore hard to imagine how children can be transported safely managing social distancing"

"Snack and Lunch time seating could be a huge problem, If adhering to a 2 metre distance it would not be feasible to use the tables as normal as these sit 8 – 10 children! We could ask the children so sit on the floor to keep their distance but as we know from experience this would be really difficult to enforce.

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Would the social distancing "rules" we will have to apply outweigh the children's enjoyment? I think that taking into account all of this and unless social distancing guidance is relaxed it may not be feasible to offer a summer holiday club."

Hygiene, PPE and testing

"PPE is an issue in these settings as this can scare children, but hand washing stations and regular cleaning of the areas and equipment would be appropriate, with the usual aprons being used to protect clothes.

Staff will have to have areas where they can safely change their working clothes to help prevent them taking the virus home to their families. And follow guidance already being used by keyworkers, such as a uniform/work clothes bag, shower once when home including washing hair. Wash work clothes, putting them in the machine yourself, again to limit cross contamination."

"I envisage an intensive cleaning programme being built into our day. This has a his has a resource implication as might involve staff staying later (at the moment several staff leave at both 5 and 5.30 with just a few staying until 6)

"Yes, testing is key. 4 of our 14 staff are of Asian/Kurdish origin the first group of which we know have been disproportionately affected by the virus, so we need to be aware of this. Our access to outdoor space isn't great and requires careful staff deployment and also issue re keeping the toys and equipment down there clean and safe as we don't have easy access to a tap down there"

"Children making and then wearing bandanas could be okay as a few already use these and think it's "cool." They are easily made out of a pair of old pyjama bottoms and require no sewing and would cost nothing. Staff could do the same and I have already made mine!"

"Handwashing and Anti bac hand gel supplies would need to be ordered in as not available to buy over the counter in quantity."

"PPE for staff - masks. Already difficult to source but would need to be essential for workers. Aprons/gloves for any close care.
Wearing long hair tied back.

Less emphasise on sitting down with children - close contact. Staff to assist adhering to safe distancing. More emphasis on outdoor play.

Equipment that could easily be disinfected. Remove hard to clean or play items that could harbour germs.

Parental collections would need to be external. Parents not allowed into the setting to reduce cross contamination. “

“We also have staff who are in the shielding category which will cause some staffing issues if that time is extended beyond June.”

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Training, Attachment and community

“It’s been really busy over the last few days because we are thinking long term and doing a monthly consultation on redundancies. What I want to share is what is coming back. The staff love their jobs, love working with their children and missing them hugely. They understand the pressures on management and there is a trust that we will do everything in our power to save jobs. We have staff volunteering for anything and everything including offering unpaid support to vital services while they are off.

We have given them training links and turned our face to Face courses into online ones as well. I am starting a 7-week course tomorrow on International intergenerational Activities with the University of Granada. When we do get back, we will have staff with a new level of expertise.”

“The care offered, will depend on what the school timetable looks like so it may be full day care with breakfast and lunch for those not at school. We have had support in recent years, from xxxxxx Bairns during holiday time, with breakfast and lunches being supplied. If there was a way to continue this support for families, it would make a huge difference to families who are in financial constraints caused by the lockdown and those who would not normally have to use the provision.”

“Keeping continuity for children with staff and school timetable will be essential to maintain an excellent level of nurture and care for all children. They will need outlets for their anxieties, worries and re-build and strengthen friendships and relationships which have been suddenly taken away from them. Continuity of staff, forming bonds and attachments giving a holistic approach to children's recovery from a traumatic time for some if not all of them, is essential to giving children a safe and nurturing environment to express themselves. “

“We are in regular contact with our families with updates on our Facebook page and email, offering support or advice if needed. Our Facebook page is being used for staff, children and parents/carers to share photos and ideas of fun activities. Our families and committee have been very supportive to staff and each other and we feel lucky to work within a strong, caring a community.”

"I would love the opportunity to speak with other ASC providers to hear what their thoughts are on the future of ASC. "

"– we will look at the obstacles and devise a wonderful plan in place to keep things going. I have sent the link to your thoughts to all the team and asked them to list the threats and then we will come up with solutions so thank you for making us think of the future.

I am also forwarding the attached self-care guide which came in this morning from N. You may already have this. I think it is great and again, have sent it to my team this morning and am encouraging them to read it as it has something for everyone in it."

"More use of the arts and music, physical games that do not involve too much touch. I intend having some staff meetings and training sessions before we restart if at all possible, to go over how we will deal with this"

"Priority to vulnerable children in need and keyworkers to give those doing this now a break? In terms of teachers and many of you needing to take time off in the summer. We would be in a position to run a limited service (see above re-funding and other issues) but only if we felt it was safe to do so. My feeling is that it would be better to restart the service in August if this would give the virus more time to burn through. The problem is if parents are back at work in increasing numbers, they are going to need a service. I think this is really key and need good guidance on it to enable me to be able to guide our parent board to the right decision. "

"Remembering children need consistent care and attachment relationships too...you know your children well...Yes. Luckily, lots of the children don't attend in the summer anyway so I'm hoping that relationships will be re-established after the summer in the same way they are every year but with a bigger gap than normal. This will be a key part of the staff training for getting the service up and running. I'm going to be working on training sessions to deliver as soon as we can safely hold them. Also subject to getting a school let."

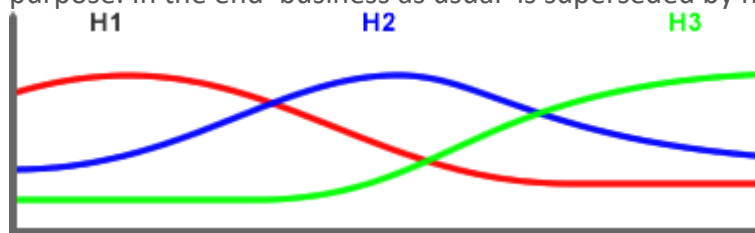
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Appendix 2: Here is a page lifted directly from the International Futures Forum

The Three Horizons model: International Futures Forum Explanation

The first horizon - H1 - is the dominant system at present. It represents 'business as usual'. As the world changes, so aspects of business as usual begin to feel out of place or no longer fit for purpose. In the end 'business as usual' is superseded by new ways of doing things.

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Innovation has started already in light of the apparent short-comings of the first horizon system.

This forms a second horizon - H2. At some point the innovations become more effective than the original system – this is a point of disruption.

Clayton Christensen called it the 'innovator's dilemma' – should you protect your core business that is on the wane or invest in the innovation that looks as if it might replace it?

Meanwhile, there are other innovations happening already that today look way off beam. This is fringe activity. It feels like it is a long way from H1, based on fundamentally different premises.

This is the third horizon - H3. It is the long term successor to business as usual – the radical innovation that introduces a completely new way of doing things. The model offers a simple way into a conversation about:

the dominant system and the challenges to its sustainability into the future, ie the case for change (horizon 1) the desirable future state, the ideal system we desire and of which we can identify elements in the present that give us encouragement (horizon 3) the nature of the tensions and dilemmas between vision and reality, and the distinction between innovations that serve to prolong the status quo and those that serve to bring the third horizon vision closer to reality (horizon 2) a mature perspective that accepts the need both to address the challenges

IFF has used this model with a number of different groups. One observation has been that most policy making, and most policy discussion, occurs by default in the first horizon. It is about fixing the failing system, innovating in order to maintain it, 'keeping the lights on'. The extended model of the three horizons opens up a new policy domain for most people: second horizon policy making underpinned by third horizon aspirations.

IFF member Bill Sharpe's new book on [Three Horizons: The Patterning of Hope](#) is now available in the IFF Shop. In addition, a [short slide presentation](#) outlining a simple process to kickstart a three horizons conversation can be downloaded from slideshare alongside a [longer presentation](#) describing in more detail some of the underlying dynamics.

The information on this page is directly from <https://www.internationalfuturesforum.com/three-horizons> 29th April 2020