

# Adapting to COVID-19

It has been a very challenging 18 months for all involved in education and training, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme combined with the willingness of the majority of the public to adhere to lockdown and associated restrictions means that hopefully, the new academic term will start to resemble some degree of normality.



I have been hugely impressed by how all in education and training have responded positively to the challenges faced due to the pandemic and embraced digital technology to ensure some degree of continuity of learning and support for young people. I am equally proud of how the SSERC team adopted a creative and innovative approach to supporting the education community during the crisis: remote learning, SSERC\_TV, SSERC Online Learning self-study courses, return to school COVID-19 guidance and support, sending resource kits to teachers homes to support continued practical professional learning and ensuring that our Young STEM Leader and STEM Ambassador programmes continue to support learners through a range of online opportunities.

It would be easy to concentrate on the negatives associated with the pandemic, but it has driven change that will help shape the new – and better - normal. For SSERC, we have seen increased reach related to digital technology use, and most of our professional learning opportunities were reconfigured to be delivered online.

As an organisation with a reputation for excellence in our hands-on, practical, experiential professional learning, we look forward to seeing the return of delegates to SSERC and supporting more localised face-to-face professional learning. While we see the benefits of adopting a blended approach to professional learning, we will never be persuaded that digital delivery can be an adequate alternative for much of our face-to-face provision, which robustly supports the development of four different kinds of abilities among our colleagues in education: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualising and active experimentation; all carried out within an environment that offers opportunities for safe, professional discussion, dialogue and debate and the development of long-lasting professional networks.

It is encouraging that where there is a significant concern with, and criticism of, some organisations that support education, we have been overwhelmed with powerful messages of support from across the education community in Scotland and The UK. We are a small organisation, but we do punch well above our weight, with ongoing and increasing success. We will continue to listen to those that we serve. We will continue to evolve, grow and develop our products and services. In doing so, we continue to be regarded as a one-stop-shop and the “go-to” organisation for STEM education, training and engagement in Scotland (and beyond). <<

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