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PAAVS – Building the foundations of training and learning

PAAVS Centre Introduction Pack

A guide to PAAVS for
potential PAAVS Centres



PAAVS
Partnership for Access to Accreditation for the
Voluntary and community Sector
(2007)

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Welcome and background information

An introduction to PAAVS

PAAVS (Partnership for Access to Accreditation for the Voluntary and community Sector) is an initiative developed by Vsipd (a Norwich-based VCS charity) which makes it easier for VCS (voluntary and community sector) organisations (or organisations working with the VCS) to access NOCN courses and units which are specific to the learner, organisation and sector. PAAVS is now facilitated by Community Connections, a Great Yarmouth community organisation with learning and training at its core – see www.communityconnections.org.uk for more information.

Why NOCN?

The NOCN is a leading UK provider of accreditation services for adult learning – see www.nocn.org.uk for more details. There are specific aspects that must be covered for each NOCN course/unit, but within those it is up to each organisation to construct the course as they see fit. This flexibility ensures that, within each NOCN course required areas of study, a course can be tailored to suit each organisation or, indeed, individual. This means qualifications are accessible regardless of the organisation's or the individual learner's needs.

Where did PAAVS come from?

Basically, the premise of PAAVS is this – by sharing VCS resources, organisations are able to deliver much more than the individual parts.

Vsipd, a Norwich charity focusing on VCS training and workforce development, began developing PAAVS in 2005. PAAVS was originally a pilot project in Norfolk which was funded by Changeup East and Capacitybuilders. The aim was to provide VCS organisations the opportunity to deliver accredited courses through the NOCN by setting up one NOCN approved centre and allowing other organisations to 'tag' onto this.

Over the course of the project, it emerged that not only did VCS organisations need an organisation to tag onto as an approved centre (and thus be able to deliver accredited courses) but that these organisations also needed more in-depth support with the preparation of their learning programmes, with portfolio compilation, with assessing, with internal moderation. PAAVS evolved to meet this need.

PAAVS resources were developed in conjunction with the PAAVS delivery partners to meet their overall needs, the result being that resources were available to all which were composed from the best practice and experience of all delivery partners, thus allowing the quality bar to be raised to the maximum knowledge and expertise of every delivery partner in every facet of delivering accredited learning.

In much the same way as a school teacher would not be expected to do *everything* that is needed for the learning they deliver to be accredited, PAAVS provides an administrative and support centre that allows people to get on with training and learning. PAAVS is not hand-holding but foundation building, increasing the capacity of VCS organisations, allowing them to take control of their own training and learning provision.

How does PAAVS work?

The sections in the PAAVS Resource Pack are:

- Introduction: Laying out the basics steps and background
- Application process: Template policies, risk assessment etc. that organisations will need to satisfy the NOCN that the correct infrastructure is in place
- Lesson preparation and assessment: Comprehensive advice and information that would assist a delivery partner in preparing and assessing the learning programme
- Portfolio compilation: Advice and template forms that could be used to evidence work
- Learner handbook: Template learner handbook that organisations can simply drop their details in and offer to their learners as comprehensive support – information on levels, what the course means, housekeeping, their rights etc.
- Registration: Simply explained process and sheets for registering learners
- Learner questionnaires: Template learner questionnaires and skills scans etc. to enable organisations to chart soft outcomes
- Additional guidance: In-depth advice on supporting those with additional learning needs as well as explicit advice on marketing, logos to be used etc.

The idea is that any organisation wishing to undertake NOCN course provision will have everything they need at their fingertips. A handy glossary also ensures easy access of those hard to reach bits of information.

The content of the PAAVS Internal Moderator Pack includes:

- Robust internal moderation process clearly and easily explained
- Template forms that could be used for internal moderation, plus notated examples
- Other, useful guidance to complete the picture for internal moderators

The aim here is to provide in-depth support for any internal moderators.

The sections of the PAAVS Centre Pack are:

- Introduction: This is a brief introduction to PAAVS, outlining the processes and resources available
- PAAVS preparation: Detailed here are all the aspects a PAAVS Centre would need to consider before setting up their network of learning providers or in setting up accredited learning for themselves
- N/OCN approval: This section covers application to the local OCN to become an Approved Centre and provides guidance on achieving this
- From initial interest to assessment: Recruiting delivery partners, the PAAVS approval process (covers guidance on approving your delivery partners) and helping organisations prepare and assess their course
- Learner and course registration: Explains courses and learner registration
- Internal moderation: Details the procedures needed to ensure internal moderation standards are upheld and how to approve your internal moderators etc.
- General running: Includes your organisational folders and also covers general administrative requirements of being a PAAVS Centre
- Quality: Outlines how to complete quality reviews of your delivery partners in order to suggest improvements for their learning programmes

The PAAVS Centre Pack details everything that an organisation would need to do to become a centre for NOCN accredited learning provision and to offer this opportunity to partner organisations. The PAAVS Centre Pack also includes the PAAVS Resource Pack and PAAVS Internal Moderator Pack as one whole set, with an organisation purchasing all three as 'the PAAVS Centre Pack', then to offer the PAAVS Resource Pack and PAAVS Internal Moderator Packs to their delivery partners (if there are any).

Overview

All the packs are laid out with simple step-by-step processes, with the reader being referred to the appropriate sections depending upon where in the process the organisation is. Organisations have found this easily accessible approach extremely useful, ensuring accredited learning is a quick, attainable and hassle-free process!

Instead of setting up your own NOCN approved learning programme from scratch and having to devise appropriate quality processes and adapt as you go along (a process which can take many months, even years) PAAVS allows organisations to quickly get up and running and to be able to access the tools that will help ensure learning programmes delivered are of a consistently high quality. As you can see from the 'What have people said about PAAVS' section later on in this pack, it is not just us who believe this.

There is no obligation to do *everything* as laid out in the PAAVS Packs, but such processes of good practice are strongly recommended. Using these quality processes, we feel, will help you ensure you are able to facilitate and/or deliver quality learning programmes.

*Whether you are interested in setting up your own NOCN accredited course from scratch (including becoming an NOCN Approved Centre) or setting up your own learning partnership, **PAAVS not only provides the right conditions for you to enable the quality of such programmes to be assured, it also cuts the time dramatically to a weeks timescale, not a months and months or even years timescale.***

The PAAVS Centre's roles and responsibility

Whether you are interested in setting up as an NOCN Approved Centre to deliver your own learning or whether you want to use this opportunity to facilitate your own learning partnership, PAAVS is there to support you. The guidance offered in the PAAVS Centre Pack allows someone to be an expert in PAAVS/NOCN delivery, whereas delivery partners will not be expected to be so – that is the role and responsibility of the PAAVS Centre, unburdening other organisations of this to allow them to focus on their delivery.

Broadly speaking, the roles and responsibilities of a PAAVS centre should be to:

- Be an expert on all NOCN/PAAVS matters
- Facilitate Action Learning Groups – standardisation events which aim to support tutors and internal moderators in their roles
- Support organisations in preparing their learning programmes, able to match each organisation's expertise with NOCN evidencing
- Be the liaison between the NOCN and delivery partners on all matters; doing the paperwork, dealing with issues, implementing required changes. This shall enable delivery partners to concentrate on their delivery

As the PAAVS Centre becomes more familiar with the processes, they will be able to more swiftly and confidently deal with necessary processes or offer required advice. Delivery partners will benefit from this knowledge and they will benefit from not having to have made that journey, from scratch, individually. PAAVS provides new PAAVS Centres with the same benefits – rather than having to start from scratch you, too, can benefit from acquired expertise and knowledge and be more easily able to get on and do what you are there to do – deliver and/or facilitate accredited courses.

It is rare that one person is able to dedicate their entire role to facilitate this delivery of accredited learning – especially if this involves a wider learning partnership. PAAVS breaks down the tasks involved which can then be delegated depending on workload, expertise and personal development desires. Through PAAVS, accredited learning can be achieved with the minimum of effort and the maximum of customer satisfaction and to the highest of quality standards. It also provides the ideal opportunity to put VCS partnership working into action, which is where the funding climate is gravitating towards.

What courses can you deliver through PAAVS?

The beauty of PAAVS is that it – via the NOCN – is able to offer courses that may not have been previously available to the VCS. It also allows organisations to deliver their own course, rather than sending their staff, volunteers and service users out on external training courses and have had to pay for, year-on-year. The NOCN enables accreditation of every conceivable skill and if a unit isn't available, a new unit can be drawn up to meet a specific need. PAAVS supports organisations in this complete process.

Examples of NOCN accredited courses delivered through PAAVS have been:

- A sexual violence support organisation accrediting their induction programme for helpline volunteers
- A drug and alcohol charity course in befriending skills for ex and progressing service users designed to support newly arrived clients
- A not-for-profit social enterprise delivering a course on trusteeship
- An independent training provider's course on interpersonal skills
- An organisation working with those with disabilities delivering an horticulture course for their service users, accrediting work previously done informally

Benefits of PAAVS

PAAVS offers a number of benefits for individuals, organisations and the VCS:

- Saving organisations' and individuals' time, money and effort in accessing accredited training
- Appropriate and creative assessment methods, patterns and sites of delivery to suit the sector
- Specialist training and learning for, and by, the VCS
- Coherent provision
- Organisational infrastructure development
- Benchmarking to national quality standards
- Tutor skills development support
- Potential for organisations to gain funding to deliver accredited training and learning
- Wider geographical availability of training and learning



Why choose PAAVS?

Taking all this into consideration, then, *why choose PAAVS?*

- **PAAVS benefits the VCS as a whole**
 - More VCS staff and volunteers taking up accredited CPD activities
 - Improved geographical/thematic coverage of appropriate courses
 - Increase in quality, benchmarked training and learning available to VCS
 - Co-ordination and reduced duplication in training and learning activities
- **PAAVS provides a path to accreditation**

The VCS has a wealth of skills, knowledge and experience, and accreditation seeks to 'prove' this. Through PAAVS we hope that this resource – the people of the VCS – will be more ably recognised and that these skills, knowledge and experience can be more easily acknowledged.
- **PAAVS provides support throughout actual course delivery**

PAAVS provides not only a path to accreditation, but assistance throughout actual course delivery, too. The comprehensive *PAAVS Packs* take organisations through every step, from the initial accreditation process, through to course delivery and beyond. The *PAAVS Packs* seek not to offer vague advice but to actually help with the nuts and bolts of delivery.
- **PAAVS lowers costs**

By sharing the time and costs of provision, accreditation through PAAVS is accessible at a lower price than would otherwise be possible.
- **PAAVS has already done all the hard work**

Templates for all policies and forms required for NOCN approval have been prepared and all the development time it takes to work out the processes needed has also already been undertaken – all the hard work has been done so you don't have to! PAAVS Centres just need to follow the steps required to enable them to deliver and/or facilitate accredited course/s.

An opportunity not to be missed!

In a matter of *weeks*, **you** (your organisation) could be well on the way to facilitating a learning partnership or delivering your own NOCN course.

Great for:

- Your learners if they are staff (recognition of their knowledge and experience and the opportunity to learn something new)
- Your learners if they are volunteers or service users (perhaps aiding steps in their employment)
- You (the increased view of professionalism of your organisation in providing accredited learning may assist you in funding applications), and
- The VCS as a whole, improving the service we are able to offer to all our staff, volunteers and service users.



What people have said about PAAVS

“PAAVS can offer benefits to VCOs (Voluntary and Community Organisations) of a range of sizes and areas of interest and in relation to a variety of different learning programmes.

PAAVS is likely to be of particular value to organisations lacking the experience or capacity to seek awarding body recognition independently.

The PAAVS structure is seen as potentially saving time, being more cost effective and avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort. There is clear evidence that engagement with PAAVS has contributed to organisational development and increased the external credibility of individual organisations.”

– Some opinions from Niace’s independent evaluation of PAAVS, 2006

“It is a new dimension in accessing support and qualifications”

– PAAVS Delivery Partner, 2006

“PAAVS has given me the opportunity to learn and grow and to help others do the same”

– PAAVS Delivery Partner, 2006

“PAAVS has assisted us in clarifying what learning outcomes opportunities it wants to offer its clients. Our clients have found the PAAVS input invaluable in helping them define their objectives”

– PAAVS Delivery Partner, 2006

“PAAVS brings team players together in the pursuit of quality learning and partnership working”

– PAAVS Delivery Partner, 2006

“Our organisation has benefited from being part of a larger learning brokerage regarding cost and learning provision”

– PAAVS Delivery Partner, 2006

“I feel it is an excellent way of allowing the voluntary sector to accredit skills that would normally go unnoticed”

– PAAVS Delivery Partner, 2007

“The support gained from organisations and having the opportunity to work together, sharing information regarding good practice and providing new learning opportunities is immensely beneficial to the sector. PAAVS has put together resources that ensure all delivery partners are working to a very high standard.

PAAVS is ahead of its time and is something other counties would love to have.”

– PAAVS Delivery Partner, 2007

“PAAVS has been essential in helping our organization provide the information required by the OCN. The meetings for staff have been equally helpful and useful in sharing good practice.”

– PAAVS Delivery Partner, 2007

“We have found PAAVS to be a very positive and helpful service without which we would not have been able to teach OCN accredited courses to service users, from which they and the wider community benefited.”

– PAAVS Delivery Partner, 2007

“The prospect of gaining accreditation for our induction programme was exciting and at the same time daunting. But with your attention to detail and easy to follow guidelines, you have taken the pain out of the process, and at the same time allowed me to get on with the task of pulling the programme content into shape. I found meeting with other people going through the process interesting and inspiring, and a very good use of my time.”

– PAAVS Delivery Partner, 2007

“An excellent programme well executed”

– OCN Eastern Region External Moderator, 2006

“The overall emphasis on quality, improvement and standardisation is impressive. PAAVS is building systems which will enable its potential for growth with numerous delivery partners”

– OCN Eastern Region Quality Reviewer, 2006



Costs, final thoughts and what next?

Costs

The costs for purchasing the PAAVS Packs are £2500 to include one day induction training. This training itself is accredited, so with a bit of additional homework, individuals can achieve a qualification in 'Operating an NOCN Approved Centre.'

Equating the cost of the PAAVS Packs with the development time savings and you can see that it is a very cost effective way of reaching your goal of delivering and/or facilitating accredited learning. For example, it took 2 years with two members of staff to come to PAAVS as it is now. Adding to this the benefits of being able to move onto an income generation phase much quicker, where you and your partners could deliver accredited courses for a cost to learners from outside of your/their organisation, then the long-term financial and development prospects look extremely positive. You will also be offering accredited courses that were not previously available to the VCS, so will be ensuring the sector goes from strength-to-strength, improving in both range and quality of expertise delivered. A PAAVS Centre may also choose to charge a subscription for organisations to access the service, as the original Norfolk PAAVS chose to do.

Final thoughts

We hope that you will see the benefits of this opportunity to your organisation and that you choose to 'come on board.' Please contact us for any further information or if you want to talk through your options. A face-to-face visit can also be arranged, where the resources can be looked at, talked through and explored before a decision on signing up to PAAVS is reached (expenses shall have to be met, unless the interested party travels to Community Connections).

What happens next?

If you feel that:

- Your organisation will benefit from PAAVS in assisting you in facilitating your own learning partnership, or that;
- Your organisation will benefit from PAAVS in assisting you in becoming an NOCN Approved Centre and in delivering your own NOCN accredited learning and that;
- Your organisation can see the benefits of this investment for longer term development needs, then
- **You are welcomed and encouraged to sign up to PAAVS!**

We look forward to hearing from you.

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