



Literacy Aotearoa
Choice Change Freedom



Disability Action Plan (DAP) July 2025 update

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*Tawhiti rawa tō tātou haerenga, te kore haere tonu. Nui rawa ō tātou mahi te kore mahi tonu.
We have come too far, to not go further. We have done too much, to not do more.*

nā Tā James Henare



Literacy Aotearoa
Choice Change Freedom



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Section 1: DAP Progress Update

Introduction

When it comes to inclusion, Literacy Aotearoa refers to diversity as a space where differences are recognised and respected as all other human variations. Literacy Aotearoa, as an education provider and employer, is committed to becoming an organisation that exemplifies inclusion across all our activities by recognising the impacts of exclusivity for those faced with a disability be it permanent, temporary or situational.

The Literacy Aotearoa Disability Action Plan 2022 - 2026 (DAP) is our commitment to ensuring those faced with disability are given equal opportunities that ensure that learners are critically literate and able to realise their full social, cultural and economic potential.

Over the past 12 months, Literacy Aotearoa has undergone a significant period of transformation and progression, and this has aligned with our Disability Action Plan (DAP). Our DAP helps identify good practices and offers a blueprint for change and helps ensure disabled learners experience better outcomes throughout their education journey, as well as ensuring Literacy Aotearoa meets our responsibilities under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Our priority groups include:

Priority Group 1

People in families and communities whose life prospects, personal, social and financial well-being would be most assisted by higher literacy levels.

- Literacy Aotearoa will further extend the reach of our whānau and community-centred services to ensure we reach those with no or low qualifications.
- We focus on building relationships and working with many whānau communities including Māori and Pasifika and disabled communities.

Priority Group 2

People in workplaces whose ongoing employment and earnings capability would most be enhanced through gaining higher literacy levels.

- Literacy Aotearoa will further grow our capability and capacity to work with those seeking vocational training in workplaces.
- We focus on working with employers and their employees who are most vulnerable to changes in skill sets and employment conditions and build transferability of foundation skills and competencies.

Our work has moved from the foundational Problem Definition stage to the more strategic Analysis and Planning phase. This transition has been driven by both organisational change, most notably the appointment of a new Chief Operations Officer (COO), a Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment, National Quality Assurance Manager, Chief Information Officer (CIO), and a National Business Insights and Contracts Manager, in and with a renewed focus, on the learner experience, the reduction of equity gaps, and the strategic use of data and digital tools to support learner success.

This report outlines the outcomes that have been achieved through the implementation of our DAP to date, focusing on how we are working with our learners and staff, what difference these actions have made, how educational outcome gaps have been addressed, and how we are monitoring progress.

Apprenticeship support

In 2024 we supported 301 apprentices referred by eleven ITOs. Many were Māori, Pasifika, or new migrants, often balancing full-time work, family responsibilities, and learning demands. Forty-two percent of apprentices disclose learning differences such as dyslexia or dyspraxia.

Delivery is tailored to qualification and apprenticeship requirements and flexes around work schedules. Close collaboration with advisors and employers keeps training aligned with real-world job demands.

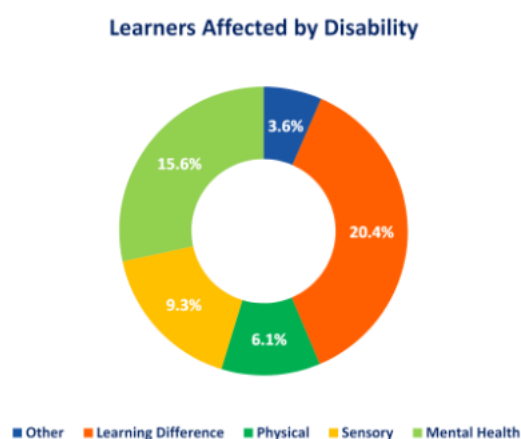
Tutors work alongside learners to develop strategies for reading and writing reports, understanding health and safety documentation, managing time and workload, and communicating effectively with supervisors and peers.

Communicate Participation

Our MSD Community Participation training supported 30 learners in 2024 with high needs and disabilities. Our delivery approach prioritises inclusive, collaborative learning environments that foster both personal and academic growth. Learners are encouraged to engage with peers through structured activities that promote mutual support, relationship-building, and active participation.

This approach reduces isolation, normalises diverse learning experiences, and encourages a sense of community. Learners develop essential interpersonal skills, such as communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution, that are foundational for ongoing participation in education, employment, and wider community life.

While learners work toward individual goals at their own pace, the group dynamic remains an important aspect of the learning environment. Collaboration supports deeper engagement with learning content, as peers share ideas, offer clarification, and work through challenges together. This strengthens understanding, builds confidence and fosters a sense of agency.



1.1 Outcomes Achieved from DAP Implementation

Since the implementation of our DAP, Literacy Aotearoa has made substantial progress in both organisational capability and learners with disabilities outcomes. Some of the most significant outcomes include:

High-Impact Projects Achieved

Several high-impact national initiatives have been implemented as part of our strategic shift, including:

- **Strategic Plan 2025-2027 and Te Tiriti o Waitangi alignment:** revised strategic plan, reconfirming our work on how we impact our learners and their communities.
- **Learner Insights Study:** Investigating the lived experiences of learners to inform better programme design and reduce equity gaps. Learner stories captured in video by partnership with Better Aotearoa.
- **Increased Digital Inclusion:** The provision of Chromebooks to learners who need them, and Pen Readers for accessibility, has been rolled out to sites around the motu. Learners have access to more tools they need to participate meaningfully in their education, with fewer technological barriers
- **Technology and Data Strategy Overhaul:** Appointment of Chief Information Officer (CIO) to lead investment in site infrastructure review.

1.2 Our Approach

We deliver our services through small group classes, one-to-one support, and community-based programmes tailored to the needs of learners. Our trained tutors use culturally responsive, strengths-based teaching methods that recognise each person's background and aspirations.

We collaborate with communities, employers, and other organisations to ensure our learning opportunities are accessible and impactful. We recognise that literacy refers to learning in English, te reo Māori, NZ Sign and other languages, and ensure we have the skills to teach across different backgrounds and languages.

Our commitment to professional development and innovation ensures that our programmes remain effective and responsive to the changing needs of Aotearoa.

Empowering Tutors

We have invested in tutor training to ensure staff understand the 'why' behind our initiatives. Cluster Champions provide ongoing site-level support to ensure consistent delivery and help tutors navigate data tools and cultural responsiveness frameworks. These champions also serve as a feedback channel to leadership on learner needs and operational challenges.

1.3 Evidence of Impact on Learners

Goal Completion

Learner data is collected as a part of our Individual Learning Plan (ILP) process. Each learner has an ILP. At the completion of any ILN, WLN and ACE training we invite the learner to self-assess and let us know if their individual goals were: fully met, partially met, or not met reenroling, or not met and not reenroling, with Literacy Aotearoa.

- 84.5% of Māori learners in 2024 either fully or partially met their learning goals
- 69.9% of Pasifika learners in 2024 either fully or partially met their learning goals
- 82.3% of disabled learners in 2024 either fully or partially met their learning goals

Analysis for 2023 and 2024 across priority groups

- Over 80% of Māori, disabled learners and women consistently judge that they have fully or partially met their learning goals. This is a significant achievement for a large group of learners, showing the strength of the training.
- Pasifika judgments of meeting learning goals has been lower than 80%, with the largest proportion of learners not re-enrolling (16.5%). This is an area that we are seeking to address with added capacity from the new roles in our education team to review our Pasifika strategy.

In 2025, 91.1% of learners fully or partially met their goals or are re-enrolling, indicating strong overall engagement and satisfaction. Only 10.4% did not meet their goals and are not re-enrolling, showing a relatively small proportion of disengaged learners. The majority of learners are making progress or choosing to continue their learning, which reflects positively on programme delivery. However, one group showed a notably higher rate of non-reenrolment after not meeting goals, highlighting an area for targeted improvement.

Employment and Further Study Outcomes

Post-programme destination data also shows improvement:

- 66% of learners moved into further education in 2024 (up from 57% in 2023).
- Employment outcomes are improving slowly (22% in 2024), but gaps remain for certain groups, such as Māori males and disabled learners.

These figures reinforce our belief that learning is opening doors for many, though further work is needed to connect learning with employment outcomes, particularly for our highest-need groups.

1.4 Addressing Gaps in Educational Outcomes

Our equity approach is grounded in intentional design and tailored support, not uniformity. This includes:

Disaggregated Data Analysis

We disaggregate learner data to examine the unique challenges and progress of each priority group without making direct comparisons. This has helped us understand the complexity of barriers affecting Māori, Pacific Peoples, disabled learners, and youth.

Culturally Responsive Design

We use culturally appropriate models like Te Whare Tapa Whā and the Fono Fale to guide delivery. Tutors are trained to embed these frameworks in both pedagogy and learner support practices.

Inclusive Evaluation Methods

We're replacing one-size-fits-all surveys with feedback methods that are more accessible and meaningful to different learner groups. For example, some learners prefer oral or visual responses over written forms. New tools under development aim to capture more representative data.

Reducing Barriers

Technology and wrap-around support have been central to removing common learning barriers. In addition to providing devices, we've integrated dyslexia screening and provided assistive technology like Pen Readers at all sites. These tools are critical in levelling the playing field for neurodiverse learners.

1.5 Monitoring Progress

We have enhanced our data systems to ensure accurate, real-time reporting. Monitoring is multi-tiered and includes:

- **Tutor-level monitoring:** ILPs, mid-programme reviews, and completion data.
- **Site-level coordination:** Weekly reviews of data gaps and completion trends.
- **Cluster-level escalation:** Weekly meetings with the National Cluster Manager and regular check-ins with Cluster Champions.
- **Organisational oversight:** Monthly dashboards and quarterly reporting to Te Tumuaki and Te Koruru.

We also use learner management system (LMS) tools to track specific outcomes and trends over time. For instance, our EBS system now allows us to filter down to individual learners or cohorts, enabling targeted intervention.

Conclusion

Our organisation is operating with stronger cohesion, clearer priorities, and improved systems that allow us to act quickly and effectively. Through intentional design, culturally responsive practices, and a commitment to ongoing review, we are making a measurable difference in learners' lives.

Section 2 – Lessons Learnt

Introduction

As we reviewed our performance over the past year or so, we have taken time to reflect on the effectiveness of our interventions and initiatives to date. The insights gained from this reflective process provides a foundation for identifying what is working, what is not, and why. Our commitment to continuous improvement—anchored in data, learner voice, and cultural responsiveness—has deepened our organisational understanding and responsiveness. Below we explore these learnings, mapped against the seven learner success capabilities, and share the implications for our ongoing work.

2.1 Interventions and Initiatives

Literacy Aotearoa has trialled and implemented a wide range of initiatives since launching the DAP. These initiatives address both systemic and local challenges across teaching, technology, learner engagement, and organisational culture. Key interventions include:

- **Māori and Pacific Peoples Engagement Strategy (Te Tiriti Review)**
- **Learner Engagement Process (LEP) Redesign**
- **Learner Insights Study (ongoing)**
- **Data Reform and Weekly Monitoring**
- **National Technology Review (Chromebooks, Pen Readers)**
- **Updated Learner Satisfaction Tools**
- **Dyslexia Screening and the DFQM Journey**
- **Curriculum and LEP rewritten at Step 3 of the Learning Progressions**
- **Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) embedded and aligned with learner voice**
- **Additional staff training in working with, and teaching, neurodiverse adult learners.**

These interventions reflect a blend of strategic planning, grassroots staff insights, and learner feedback. Each has offered valuable lessons—both in terms of their successes and the challenges encountered.

2.2 Evaluation and Impact of Initiatives

We evaluated our interventions through a mixture of internal reviews, learner satisfaction surveys, progress data, tutor feedback, and destination outcomes. Several key findings emerged.

What Has Worked Well:

a. Visible Leadership and Strategic Alignment

- The decision to engage Te Tumuaki and senior leadership in regular site visits and face-to-face engagement sessions has built a strong culture of trust and alignment. This also allowed senior leadership to understand and drive the accessibility challenges identified at sites.
- Staff are better connected to the purpose behind data collection and learner success goals, leading to more consistent implementation.

b. Cluster Champion Model

- The Cluster Champions have become integral to the success of our data and learner voice strategies. Their ability to provide direct support to tutors, troubleshoot issues, and disseminate best practices has helped raise the consistency and quality of delivery.
- Champions also play a vital role in tracking local trends, identifying barriers early, and helping to close data gaps.

c. Inclusive and Flexible Teaching Practices

- Redesigning ILPs and other learner documents in plain English (Step 3) has helped tutors and learners co-construct learning goals more meaningfully.
- Tutors report increased learner engagement and clearer articulation of goals when documents are understandable and relevant.
- High-impact teaching strategies, responsive to the diverse cultural and social needs of learners, have supported progress.

d. Use of Technology to Remove Barriers

- Chromebooks, Pen Readers, and other assistive technologies have drastically reduced access barriers, particularly for learners with disabilities and those without home technology.
- Many learners now report that the availability of devices is a determining factor in their ability to participate fully and complete their programmes.

e. Monitoring and Use of Data

- Weekly data reviews, escalation pathways, and the redefined purpose of learner data have led to nearly 100% data capture across sites.
- Data literacy among staff has increased through ongoing training, contributing to more informed decision-making at the tutor and management levels.

f. Cultural Responsiveness

- Embedding models such as Te Whare Tapa Whā, Fono Fale, Te Whāriki, and Tivaevae has strengthened learner trust and engagement.
- Learners feel seen, respected, and culturally affirmed in their learning journey, and report increased satisfaction and motivation.

What Has Not Worked and Why:

a. Limited Reach of Learner Voice Tools

- Our early evaluation tools did not reach all learners equally. Those with literacy challenges, learning differences, or cultural barriers often did not engage meaningfully with standard surveys or feedback forms.
- As a result, some learner perspectives—particularly among Māori male learners and disabled learners—were underrepresented, skewing data and insights.

b. Outdated Data Application Processes

- While data capture has improved, our systems have not always translated this data into practical, real-time interventions for learner support.
- Tutors and managers require more intuitive dashboards and tools to access actionable insights that align with their day-to-day needs.

c. Equity Gaps Persist

- Despite progress, equity gaps remain, especially in programme completions and transitions into employment. For example, in 2024, only 15% of Māori male learners had pathwayed into employment compared to 58% of Māori female learners.
- The root causes are multifaceted and include systemic barriers, confidence issues, socio-economic limitations, and lack of targeted supports.

d. Tutor Variability

- Despite our best efforts, the learner experience still varies between delivery sites. This is due in part to inconsistent application of training, differing levels of tutor confidence, and challenges in maintaining uniform quality across regions.

e. Challenges in Capturing Destination Intentions

- Destination data has been collected post-programme, making it reactive rather than proactive.
- Without clear knowledge of learner aspirations at enrolment, it is difficult to align programmes or provide timely transitions to further study or employment.

2.3 Key Learnings by Capability Area

1. People, Culture, and Leadership

What we've learned: Leadership must be highly visible, supportive, and values-driven. The shift in organisational culture requires clear communication and shared accountability across all levels.

What didn't work: Initial assumptions that systems transformation could occur through documentation alone. Real change required building relationships, storytelling, and participatory leadership.

2. Data and Technology

What we've learned: High-quality data is essential, but understanding *why* and *how* to use it is just as important. Equipping staff with the right tools and training improves both teaching and data quality.

What didn't work: Data was previously viewed as a compliance task rather than a success-enabling tool. This mindset needed a shift before any technical upgrades could be effective.

3. Guided Pathways

What we've learned: Pathways must be clearly mapped, regularly reviewed, and aligned to learner aspirations. Bespoke learning journeys increase engagement and success.

What didn't work: A lack of early insight into learners' destination goals made it hard to tailor programmes. We are now shifting to pre-enrolment destination discussions and using that to guide programme selection and support services.

4. Holistic Learner Supports

What we've learned: Learners thrive when holistic needs—emotional, cultural, logistical—are acknowledged and supported. Our LEP system is central to this success.

What didn't work: We underestimated how much non-academic factors (housing, transport, mental health) influence learner engagement. These supports need more systematic integration into the learning journey.

5. Learner-Centric Systems

What we've learned: Co-designed, flexible systems centred on the learner voice are essential for success. Plain English documentation, multimodal learning options, and accessible technologies empower learners to own their journey.

What didn't work: Learners sometimes disengaged when systems were too rigid, complex, or impersonal. One-size-fits-all design doesn't meet diverse needs.

6. Teaching and Learning

What we've learned: Culturally responsive teaching strategies aligned with learner aspirations produce better outcomes. Redesigning documents at Step 3 level made a tangible difference in how learners engaged.

What didn't work: Without consistent tutor professional development, practices drifted, and learners experienced varied levels of support and instructional quality.

7. Partnerships

What we've learned: Strong partnerships with iwi, community agencies, and employers expand learner opportunities and create wrap-around support systems.

What didn't work: Partnerships were not always formalised or tracked in a way that allowed for systematic evaluation of impact. We are now prioritising relationship management systems and formal MOUs to guide strategic partnerships.

2.4 Cultural Responsiveness and Learner Identity

A core lesson has been that acknowledging and valuing learner identity is fundamental to learner success. Our Pacific and Māori learners have responded positively to culturally embedded teaching models and relationship-based pedagogy. When learners see their culture reflected in the content, tutors, and systems, they are more likely to persist, complete, and succeed.

This has also taught us that cultural responsiveness must extend beyond programme content to every layer of operations—data collection, feedback, communication, marketing, and success measures. Identity affirmation isn't a tokenistic gesture—it must be woven into the DNA of how we operate.

Conclusion

The lessons learned over the past 12 months have clarified that learner success is as much about transformation within our organisation as it is about the experiences of learners themselves. While we celebrate clear progress in technology use, staff capability, and learner satisfaction, we also recognise the work ahead in closing persistent equity gaps, refining learner voice systems, and better aligning programmes with learner aspirations.

Success in the next phase of our DAP will depend on our ability to keep learning—about our learners, from our data, and with our communities—and to turn that learning into action. The roadmap forward is clearer because of what we've discovered along the way.

Section 3 – Next Steps

Introduction

Literacy Aotearoa is approaching the next phase of its Disability Action Plan (DAP) with a renewed sense of focus, insight, and ambition. Informed by our work with staff, data analysis, lived learner experiences, and operational lessons from the past two years, we are now ready to transition into deeper implementation, consolidation, and systemic innovation.

The next stage of our Learner Success journey will focus on addressing persistent equity gaps, operationalising best practices at a national level, and aligning all activity with our revised strategic plan 2025-2027.

Our roadmap is grounded in the seven learner success capabilities and is designed to fully integrate the organisational, cultural, and technological shifts required to support all learners to reach their aspirations. Below we outline our strategic direction, upcoming projects, projected outcomes, and target timelines.

3.1 The Next Stage of Implementation

We are now entering the **Planning and Implementation** stages. This phase will focus on:

- Deepening our equity and performance data insights.
- Launching digital learning and evaluation systems.
- Strengthening priority group outcomes.
- Scaling up successful local initiatives nationally.
- Developing new co-designed feedback and evaluation tools.
- Solidifying learner voice in programme design and organisational decision-making.

This stage will be underpinned by a set of targeted workstreams that will be led by Te Koruru and members of the Executive Leadership Team.

3.2 Key Initiatives and Projects UPDATE

1. Learner Hub Launch (2025-2026)

We will roll out our new digital Learner Hub—a central component of our future-facing learning infrastructure, led by our new Chief Information Officer (CIO) and the Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment. Designed with accessibility and equity at its core, the Learner Hub will:

- Enable real-time feedback and learning progress tracking.
- Offer multimodal engagement (audio, video, text, visual).
- Provide culturally competent feedback loops.
- Include dashboards for tutors and learners to manage goals and identify at-risk learners.
- Allow learner-led goal setting and evaluation, empowering greater ownership.

We will also embed training in digital evaluation literacy—teaching learners not just to give feedback, but to understand why their voice matters and how it impacts future programming.

2. Moodle LMS Rollout (2025-2026)

In 2025-2026, we will transition to Moodle to deliver programme content more flexibly. Moodle will support:

- Blended and distance learning.
- Tailored content delivery based on learner needs.
- Differentiated pathways within the same programme.
- Progress monitoring through embedded quizzes, activities, and engagement data.

Over time, Moodle will incorporate adaptive learning features using AI and machine learning to respond to learner engagement and mastery in real time.

3. Equity Gap Reduction Project

We will launch a national project to reduce completion and destination equity gaps by:

- Identifying root causes behind differential completion and employment rates.
- Developing targeted interventions for Māori male learners and disabled learners, including whānau engagement, work-ready skill modules, and culturally responsive mentorship.
- Piloting paid work experience programmes with employers for high-need learners.

By reducing the priority group completion gaps, the goal is for more equitable post-programme employment outcomes.

4. Learner Insights Study – Phase 2

Phase 2 of our Learner Insights Study will be conducted in 2025 and will involve:

- In-depth qualitative research with learners across all priority groups.
- Thematic analysis of engagement barriers and motivators.
- Development of persona-based learner journey maps for design thinking approaches.
- Reporting insights to inform curriculum, systems, tutor training, and delivery strategy.

This will directly inform our long-term planning.

5. New Evaluation Tools and Learner Charter

We are co-designing new feedback tools that are culturally relevant, accessible, and meaningful. These will:

- Replace generic surveys with tailored instruments for Māori, Pacific, and disabled learners.
- Use a mix of audio, oral, visual, and written formats.
- Be integrated into the Learner Hub.

A **Learner Charter** will also be launched—developed in partnership with learners—which will outline their rights, responsibilities, and the shared values that underpin our learner success kaupapa. The charter aims to increase learner agency, expectations, and pride. This will replace the existing Learner Agreement they read and commit to on enrolment.

3.3 How Lessons Learnt Are Informing Our Roadmap

Everything we learned from our previous implementation phase is shaping the next. These insights are guiding our redesign of systems, the rollout of tools, and our redefinition of what success looks like.

- **From compliance to culture:** We've moved from viewing data as a reporting requirement to seeing it as a foundation for learner wellbeing, retention, and achievement.
- **From assumptions to agency:** We're no longer designing based on assumptions about learner needs—we're actively engaging learners in shaping their own success.
- **From inconsistent to standardised excellence:** Variability in tutor practice is being addressed through shared resources, national training, and peer mentoring structures.
- **From post-programme evaluation to early pathway planning:** We are implementing destination-focused enrolment conversations, so learners begin with a clear end in mind—and receive the right supports early.

Conclusion

Our organisation is operating with stronger cohesion, clearer priorities, and improved systems that allow us to act quickly and effectively. With the revised strategic plan covering 2025-2027, and with our recent staff appointments to National Support Office that are focused on our learner success, we have extended our DAP target date from 2026, to 2027, to align with the strategic plan.