

BCITO Disability Action Plan — Public Statement of Intent (2026–2028)

Our commitment

BCITO's purpose is simple: *Leading the construction industry to create the best-skilled people for tomorrow*. That only happens if disabled people can start, stay and succeed in apprenticeships on an equal basis with others.

This Disability Action Plan (DAP) is our public commitment to make that real. We use Kia Ōrite, the New Zealand code of practice for an inclusive tertiary environment, as our blueprint.

It shows clear use of Kia Ōrite, sets goals and targets, explains how we'll evaluate progress, allocates responsibilities, and outlines how we'll communicate policies and programmes.

Our approach is anchored in the social model of disability and shaped by what we have heard from disabled learners and staff: most barriers are created by systems, not by people's impairments. Learners named eight persistent barriers, from inaccessible information and platforms to low staff "disability confidence," inconsistent support, and unsafe disclosure¹. Fixing those barriers lifts achievement and wellbeing.

This plan complements the BCITO Investment Plan and Learner Success Plan and aligns with our CSNZ strategy priorities to grow a safe, skilled and inclusive construction workforce.

It builds on the progress made and lessons learned during our time as a division of Te Pūkenga, and our 34-year history of meeting the needs of the industries we serve. This plan reflects our starting point as an organisation with a strong track record and a keen understanding of the opportunities before us to support all learners, and particularly disabled learners.

By widening who can join and progress in the trades, and by building disability confidence across employers and Training Advisors, we strengthen pipelines, lift productivity, and support safer, more equitable worksites.

¹ Te Pūkenga, Te Rito, Insights from learners and staff – opportunities to enhance success for Te Pūkenga disabled learners. August 2021.

Why this matters — key facts

- Disabled people are a large part of our community. Around 24% of New Zealanders live with an impairment that lasts six months or more.
- Opportunity gap: In June 2020, 48.2% of disabled youth (15–24) were not in employment, education, or training, compared with 10.6% of non-disabled youth.
- Employment gap: Among 15–64 year-olds, disabled people’s employment rate lags non-disabled peers by about 40 percentage points.
- When support is right, outcomes converge. TEC analysis shows disabled learners who get appropriate support complete at similar rates to non-disabled learners.

These facts make inclusion a business-critical priority for the trades and for BCITO.

Understanding disability

Our commitments

BCITO's Disability Action Plan is grounded in the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016–2026 and guided by Kia Ōrite – Achieving Equity: The Code of Practice for an Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment.

These frameworks express New Zealand's commitment to equity, access, and inclusion for disabled people. We align our practice with these standards and with the expectations of the Tertiary Education Commission for work-based learning providers.

Our approach is underpinned by the social model of disability, which recognises that people are disabled by barriers in their environment, not by their impairments. We recognise that not all our learners identify with disability focused language and respect the very personal choices they make.

We are also guided by the Achieve 10-Point Plan for tertiary inclusion and by the principles of Universal Design for Learning, ensuring every learner can participate fully in employment-based education.

Our legal obligations

BCITO meets the legal obligations set out in the following Acts and standards:

- Human Rights Act 1993 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, education and service delivery.
- Education and Training Act 2020 establishes an inclusive tertiary system, supported by the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021, which sets minimum expectations for learner wellbeing and accessibility.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 requires BCITO and employers to provide safe workplaces and learning environments, including reasonable adjustments.
- Privacy Act 2020 ensures learner information, including disability disclosures, is collected and used appropriately, with clear consent.
- New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006 recognises NZSL as an official language; BCITO will support communication access through interpreters, captioning, and accessible information formats.

- Building Act 2004 and NZ Standard 4121: Design for Access and Mobility (2001) guide the selection and auditing of block-course and assessment venues for accessibility.
- Plain Language Act 2022 informs our commitment to clear, understandable communication in all learner-facing material.

BCITO's commitments also reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008), especially Articles 9 (Accessibility) and 24 (Education), the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016–2026, the Government Accessibility Charter (2018) and the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles.

The realities in work-based learning — what we've heard

From our own mahi and learner voice work, we know the construction context brings distinct challenges:

- **Disclosure and trust:** Many apprentices don't disclose impairments early, resulting in support arriving late. We're building safe disclosure processes and a learner-voice group to co-design improvements.
- **Variable disability confidence in workplaces:** Employers and staff want practical guidance on adjustments, assessment flexibility and communication that works on the job. Our ADHD research will inform targeted upskilling from 2026.
- **Information and digital access:** We're lifting accessibility in print and digital resources, including broader use of Immersive Reader.
- **Pathways and visibility:** We're partnering with Deaf Aotearoa, Ko Taku Reo, Dyspraxia NZ, Altogether Autism, Mind Matters, Brain Injury New Zealand, and ADHD NZ to open up pathways and raise visibility with industry.
- **Literacy needs:** We work closely with a range of literacy groups such as Education Unlimited, Hagley Community College and Literacy Aotearoa, which are familiar with the needs of disabled peoples.

These insights support our focus on supporting voice for disabled learners, disability-confident staff, including upskilling through courses like Disability Confidence 101, accessible information/digital, safe disclosure, mental-health support and equitable pathways, which BCITO implements in a work-based learning setting.

Our plan at a glance (2026–2028)

We organise our actions into six pillars. Each pillar includes what disabled learners can expect and targets for 2028. (We'll publish 2026 baselines in our first public update and track progress annually.)

1) Partner with disabled learners (voice at the centre)

What you can expect: Regular engagement (surveys twice yearly; regional hui); a representative disability learner-voice group that informs decisions; co-design of solutions.

Lead: Principal Advisor (Learners with Disabilities)

Targets by 2028:

- Learner-voice group established and meeting quarterly; >75% of members report influence on decisions.
- ≥60% response growth in disability surveys; ≥80% positive sentiment on “can get help when I need it.”

2) Build disability-confident people (staff, TAs and employers)

What you can expect: Practical training, tools and case studies for Training Advisors and employers; clear “how-to” on adjustments and alternative assessment; ADHD-informed practice guidance.

Lead: General Manager, Customer Engagement Group, Principal Advisor (Learners with Disabilities), Education and Quality Assurance Manager.

Targets by 2028:

- ≥80% of TAs complete disability confidence modules; ≥70% of employers engaged via micro-learnings/resources.
- All assessment policies include Universal Design principles and documented alternatives.

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3) Ensure the right support, early

What you can expect: Simple referral pathways for literacy, numeracy and specialist supports; clear timelines; faster adjustments on-job and at block courses; “no wrong door” for advice.

Lead: Principal Advisor (Learners with Disabilities).

Targets by 2028:

- Long-duration apprenticeships (outliers) reduced by 10% among disabled learners.
- Retention of disabled apprentices improves by 5 percentage points vs 2026 baseline².

4) Accessible information and digital platforms

What you can expect: Learner-facing information in accessible formats; consistent use of plain language; increased AT compatibility; expanded Immersive Reader; accessible assessments/resources.

Lead: Education and Quality Assurance Manager, Principal Advisor (Learners with Disabilities).

Targets by 2028:

- 100% new learner-facing digital content meets the Accessibility Charter approach; annual audit improvement year-on-year.
- Maintain the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark.

² Subject to resolution of relevant data quality issues.

5) Safe disclosure and privacy you can trust

What you can expect: Consistent enrolment questions; clear purpose statements; opt-in consent; multiple safe points to disclose throughout the apprenticeship; fast routes to adjustments.

Lead: Principal Advisor (Learners with Disabilities).

Targets by 2028:

- Increase the voluntary disclosure rate year on year (we will publish the baseline in 2026).
- ≥85% of disabled learners agree they “felt safe to disclose and access support.”

6) Wellbeing and equitable pathways to employment

What you can expect: Guidance for TAs and employers to respond to anxiety/mental distress; targeted partnerships that create work opportunities; visible success stories across trades.

Lead: General Manager, Customer Engagement Group, Principal Advisor (Learners with Disabilities).

Targets by 2028:

- At least three national partnerships that provide supported employment/placement options.
- Graduate outcomes reporting shows year-on-year increases in disabled apprentices in work or further training one year after completion.

Our approach aligns with our CSNZ strategy

This Plan turns strategy into practice. By removing barriers in recruitment, training and assessment, and by building disability confidence among employers, we:

- Grow a skilled workforce by tapping into the capability of disabled people who have historically been excluded.
- Lift productivity and safety through better communication, planning and adjustments on site.
- Strengthen the industry's reputation by showing that construction is a sector where everyone can thrive.

These outcomes reinforce BCITO's role in better serving disabled learners and delivering on the needs of the construction and infrastructure sector.

What we're already doing

- Twice-yearly disability surveys and establishment of a disability learner-voice group.
- ADHD research completed; recommendations will drive TA/employer upskilling from early 2026.
- Broaden the use of Immersive Reader, and provide continuous advice to resource teams on accessible design.
- Maintain and develop extensive partnerships with disabled peoples' organisations to strengthen pathways and visibility.

How we'll evaluate and report

We will evaluate against metrics recommended in the Te Pūkenga Strategic DAP (e.g., retention, achievement, progression, employment, satisfaction) and TEC guidance, and we'll publish an accessible annual update. Key measures include:

- Participation & Progress: retention, duration, and completion for disabled learners; long-duration outlier monitoring.
- Experience: survey results (access to support, safety to disclose, disability confidence of staff/employers).
- Capability & Systems: staff training completion; number of accessible resources; Accessibility Charter and DFQM milestones.

Our DAP runs on a three-year cycle with annual review and governance reporting, as recommended by TEC.

Who is responsible

- Senior Responsible Owner (ELT): sponsors delivery and reports to governance and TEC.
- Principal Advisor (Learners with Disabilities): key partnerships, operational and thought leadership.
- Disability Action Steering Group: cross-functional leaders plus learner-voice representatives, meeting bi-monthly to track delivery.
- People & Culture: disability confidence training and policy.
- Quality, Learning & Assessment: Universal Design for Learning and alternative assessment arrangements.
- Digital & Data: Accessibility Charter adoption and platform audits.
- Resource Development: accessible print/digital design and DFQM.
- Training Operations: safe disclosure and adjustments in enrolment and on-job practice.
- Employer Experience: employer guidance and industry partnerships.
- Learner Insights/Analytics: evaluation and public reporting.

How we'll communicate

We will keep this Plan easy to find and easy to read on our website in accessible formats, with a plain-language summary, NZSL-captioned explainer, and regular progress updates.

We'll front-load information at enrolment (what supports exist, how disclosure works, privacy), brief block-course providers before each intake, and equip Training Advisors and employers with practical "what to do next" guides.

If you're a learner or employer (what to do now)

- Learners: tell your Training Advisor what helps you learn best—whenever you're ready. We'll work with you to put adjustments in place and connect you with supports.
- Employers: ask us about adjustments that work on site, assessment options, and small changes that make a big difference.

He kupu whakamutunga

BCITO supports the principle "Nothing about us, without us." This plan is our public promise to disabled people, their whānau, and employers: we will remove barriers, build confidence, and design for success so more people can build their futures in construction. We'll learn in the open and publish our progress annually.

This principle sits at the heart of disability advocacy and must be visible at every level of our organisation. It means that the voices of disabled learners are not just heard, but actively shape how we work. When meeting with apprentices, our question will always be "How can we support you to succeed?", placing agency and decision-making in the hands of the learner.

Our Disability Learner Voice Group ensures that disabled ākonga have direct input into BCITO policy, practice, and continuous improvement. Alongside this, our twice-yearly learner survey captures experiences and insights that help us identify what is working and where we can do better.

We also recognise the expertise that sits outside our organisation. Partnerships with disability advocacy groups such as Deaf Aotearoa, Ko Taku Reo, and other

specialist organisations provide essential perspectives that inform and strengthen our practice. These partnerships ensure that the voices of disabled people, their whānau, and advocates all contribute meaningfully to how BCITO designs and delivers its programmes.

By embedding this principle throughout our work with learners, employers, and industry, we commit to a system where success is defined together and where disabled people lead in shaping the future of construction training in Aotearoa.

Further information – Provided for TEC review

Background and purpose

This Disability Action Plan builds on work we undertook as part of Te Pūkenga, including our contributions to the wider organisation's own Disability Action Plan.

The main body of this report is the Disability Action Plan for BCITO Limited as a standalone entity. This additional information is provided for review by the TEC only, and does not form part of our publicly available Disability Action Plan.

Understanding our context

BCITO is an organisation built on strong foundations with a 34-year history of meeting the needs of the industries we serve. As an independent private training establishment from 2026, BCITO will enable the return of industry leadership for work-based learning in line with the Government's vision for vocational education and training.

BCITO draws on a long history of supporting the building and construction industry. We have ensured over 55,000 people are industry-qualified. Our organisation was previously an independent, industry-owned industry training organisation and, more recently, a work-based learning division of Te Pūkenga.

In line with the strategic direction of Construction Skills NZ, BCITO's reason for being is to deliver high-quality, industry-led vocational education and training for New Zealand's construction sector.

Over the term of this Disability Action Plan, BCITO will build on our strong foundations in supporting disabled learners and our commitment to learner success more generally.

The following text provides information about the progress we have made in contributing to the actions of the Te Pūkenga Disability Action Plan, the lessons we have learnt from our work over the past several years, and the priorities we identified, which have been reflected in our standalone Disability Action Plan.

Progress in relation to the Te Pūkenga Disability Action Plan

The following builds on BCITO's contribution to the current DAP for Te Pūkenga with all references to that Plan.

What outcomes have been achieved so far from the implementation of your DAP? How are you working with your learners and staff to achieve better outcomes?

DAP 1.1 Regular engagement processes with disabled ākonga are initiated and sustained to identify and resolve barriers they face on an ongoing basis

DAP 1.3 Regular engagement with the vocational education disabled ākonga network(s) is supported and maintained to develop a strong disabled ākonga voice (local, regional, national)

- Two surveys of learners with disabilities were undertaken in 2025. These have provided information on areas that require attention, such as improved communication with block course providers around disability requirements.
- We are working with the BCITO Learner Voice lead to establish a disability learner voice group. We intend to have this group operational by the end of 2025.
- Completion of the BCITO ADHD research project, which included qualitative interviews with apprentices. Recommendations from this research will inform best practice policy.

DAP 2.4 Disability Community of Practice is designed to provide greater consistency, collaboration and support across the entire vocational network (campus-based, WBL and online)

- Regular contact is maintained with disability advocates throughout the network. Sharing of information that benefits learners, such as ADHD research and assessment methods.
- Presentation and attendance at VET and disability conferences such as the Neuroability Symposium 2025.
- Collaborative work with disabled peoples' organisations around vocational education for Deaf learners.

DAP 4.1 Digital Platforms are accessible in both design and content for disabled learners

- Ongoing work with the BCITO resource development team to ensure online and print resources are accessible to all learners.
- Achieving the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark provided another check on dyslexia-friendly print/digital resources.
- Expanding use of the immersive reader by learners.
- Providing feedback to the resource development team about disability best practices.

What difference has this made for learners? Provide evidence that your interventions are having the intended impact/outcome, and if they are not, please explain why.

The key differences we have identified are that:

- Survey results consistently indicate our support of learners with disabilities is of a high standard.
- The same survey also indicates our resources are accessible to learners, particularly those with reading and writing difficulties.
- ADHD Research will lead to the production of resources for the upskilling of Training Advisors and Employers. This will occur in 2026.
- Increased visibility of Deaf students to industry through workplace tours and promotion to National Advisory Groups.
- The BCITO is actively designing ways to promote the twice-annual BCITO disability survey to encourage more learners to participate. This may include SMS and possible interviews to gain a broader audience.

How have you addressed gaps in educational outcomes and lifted performance?

BCITO continues to take a structured and evidence-based approach to improving educational outcomes and ensuring equitable achievement for all learners. Targeted actions have been implemented to identify and address factors contributing to extended apprenticeship durations, with a particular focus on learners where disability-related challenges may be impacting progress. By working directly with these learners, their employers, and Training Advisors, BCITO ensures that appropriate adjustments and supports are in place to achieve fair and equitable outcomes.

In recent years, BCITO has undertaken dedicated research into ADHD within workplace learning environments. This research has provided new insights into how ADHD can influence learning and performance in trade-based training. The resulting recommendations are guiding improvements in practice, particularly in the areas of employer engagement and Training Advisor support. These changes are designed to enhance understanding of neurodiversity in the workplace and improve learning outcomes for affected apprentices.

Recognising that apprenticeships typically range from three to four and a half years in duration, BCITO acknowledges that the full impact of these practice changes will take time to be realised. Nevertheless, the organisation has embedded several initiatives that are already contributing to improved learner performance.

A key example is the implementation of a robust referral process for literacy and numeracy support. This process ensures that all learners, regardless of disability status, have access to appropriate assistance. As learners with disabilities are statistically more likely to experience challenges in these areas, the referral process has a proportionately greater positive impact on their educational outcomes.

The referral process also extends to non-literacy and numeracy disabilities, such as ADHD, where support is arranged on a case-by-case basis through partnerships with external specialist agencies. This approach ensures that learners receive tailored support aligned to their individual needs and circumstances.

In addition, obtaining the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark (DFQM) provided assurance that BCITO's systems and practices are effectively supporting apprentices with dyslexia, the most frequently reported disability among

learners. The DFQM process has strengthened BCITO's confidence that its approach is comprehensive, learner-centred, and aligned with best practice in disability inclusion.

Through these initiatives, BCITO continues to address identified gaps in educational performance and to implement sustainable improvements that promote equitable access, participation, and achievement for all learners across the construction sector.

How have you monitored progress?

BCITO monitors progress towards improved educational outcomes through several mechanisms. Ongoing analysis of long-duration apprenticeships provides valuable insight into potential barriers to completion, including those related to disability or learning support needs. Learners with known disabilities are also monitored closely to ensure that adjustments and interventions are effective in supporting their progress.

In addition, BCITO's regular learner surveys include specific questions about whether disability has affected apprenticeship duration or progress. The feedback gathered through these surveys informs continuous improvement of BCITO's systems and practices, ensuring that support remains responsive to learner needs and that progress toward equitable outcomes can be measured over time.

Progress against the 2022 and 2025 Disability Action Plans was monitored through regular performance checks. Required policy and procedural initiatives were implemented and then reviewed for alignment with the DAP, such as the introduction of the regular disability survey.

Tangible targets are set for larger areas of work, while initiatives such as the establishment of the Disability Learner Voice Group have followed smaller, phased milestones. Future targets will include progressive steps toward increasing disclosure rates and enhancing participation. These measures will also enable clearer progress reporting to the Tertiary Education Commission.

We have learnt and are applying many lessons from our work to date

What interventions and initiatives have you tried?

BCITO has implemented a range of targeted interventions and initiatives to improve educational outcomes and ensure equitable achievement for all learners, particularly those with disabilities or additional learning needs. These initiatives are informed by ongoing monitoring and research and are designed to promote inclusion, strengthen support systems, and lift overall learner performance.

Key actions include the introduction of a twice-yearly BCITO disability survey, which provides valuable data on learner experiences, levels of support, and potential barriers to progress. The survey specifically captures information on how disability may impact apprenticeship duration and completion, helping to identify where additional support or adjustments may be required.

BCITO has also expanded access to external specialist support for learners with disabilities. Through established referral pathways, learners can be connected to appropriate literacy, numeracy, or disability-related services, ensuring that assistance is tailored to individual needs.

Complementing this, BCITO has prioritised the continual upskilling of staff, including participation in the Tertiary Education Commission's *Disability Confidence 101* course. This training enhances staff capability to recognise and respond effectively to diverse learner needs within workplace-based learning environments.

Strong partnerships with external advocacy organisations further underpin BCITO's approach. Ongoing collaboration with Deaf Aotearoa, Ko Taku Reo, ADHD NZ, Mind Matters, and Altogether Autism serves a dual purpose: these organisations provide specialist guidance and support for BCITO learners, while BCITO assists them in identifying suitable educational and training pathways for their communities.

In addition, BCITO has undertaken research into ADHD within construction apprenticeships. This work has generated new insights into how ADHD influences learning in trade environments and is directly informing future practice and policy development. Alongside these initiatives, BCITO continues to closely monitor performance data and long-duration apprenticeship trends to

evaluate progress, identify emerging issues, and guide further interventions where necessary.

Through these combined actions, BCITO is building a more inclusive and responsive training system—one that recognises the diverse needs of learners and supports every apprentice to achieve successful outcomes.

Have you evaluated these? What has been the impact? And what do the evaluations demonstrate about the progress and impact?

BCITO has undertaken ongoing monitoring and informal evaluation of its initiatives to assess their effectiveness in improving learner outcomes. While not all initiatives have been subject to formal evaluation, available data and feedback indicate positive progress alongside areas requiring continued focus.

Some initiatives, particularly those centred on maintaining and strengthening relationships with external support and advocacy agencies, are relational in nature and therefore not easily measured through traditional evaluation methods. Nevertheless, these partnerships have proven valuable in facilitating timely referrals, enhancing learner support, and raising organisational awareness of disability-related needs.

BCITO's twice-annual learner surveys provide a key source of evaluative feedback. Results show a gradual improvement in learner confidence and satisfaction with the support provided. However, they also highlight that some apprentices continue to experience extended training durations due to disability-related challenges. These findings are consistent with data collected through the monitoring of long-duration apprenticeships and underscore the importance of early intervention and consistent engagement by Training Advisors. Work is ongoing to strengthen these monitoring processes and ensure that appropriate support is activated as early as possible in the learner journey.

Overall, the evaluations undertaken to date indicate that BCITO's initiatives are having a positive impact in raising awareness, improving practice, and strengthening learner support. Continued monitoring and further formal evaluation will be required to fully measure long-term outcomes and ensure that progress is sustained.

What has worked well, and what are the main issues or areas of concern? Explain the key reasons for interventions working, or not.

A recognised challenge remains around disability disclosure. BCITO acknowledges that a significant proportion of apprentices with disabilities may choose not to disclose their condition, limiting the ability to provide targeted support. Efforts are continuing to encourage greater disclosure through improved communication, trust-building, and demonstrating the tangible benefits of accessing available supports.

We are focused on making meaningful change

What is the next stage of your DAP to be implemented?

The next step for BCITO is the implementation of the Disability Learner Voice group. This will give us real-time feedback on initiatives we put in place to support learners with disabilities. Although relationships with disability advocates from other providers are strong, and a formal group does meet, the frequency of these meetings needs to increase. This will ensure the free flow of critical information in the disability education sector.

Implementation of the recommendations from the ADHD research is also going to begin in the first quarter of 2026. We will also continue to improve participation in disability surveys to ensure results are from a broad representative group.

How are the outcomes from the lessons learnt informing the next steps?

The Disability Learner Voice group will give us better insight into our progress and initiatives. Working hand in hand with disability advocacy groups is also vital. These two aspects give effect to the statement, “Nothing about us, without us,” ensuring that the disability community has a tangible voice in their journey.

For this reason, we will also be looking at ways to increase participation numbers in the twice-yearly survey.

What changes, if any, are you making to your DAP? Please explain why you are making these changes.

Greater communication with industry requires increased focus. BCITO has relatively high numbers of learners with “invisible disabilities” such as dyslexia and ADHD. Disabilities such as being Deaf or Autism, which are not invisible, have proportionally lower numbers. BCITO has interest in apprenticeships from people with these more visible disabilities; however, finding suitable employment for them is proving difficult.

Working with industry and promoting success stories to influential employers, NAG members and the general public will be added to the DAP for 2026.

There is the potential that the DAP may understate the work we do to support the success of disabled learners. Much of our support is already integrated into business-as-usual support arrangements. Helping individual learners find solutions, supporting staff to support their apprentices, upskilling of staff in specific disabilities, maintaining relationships with disability advocacy groups, and advising on resource development from a disability perspective are all tasks that are not easily represented in the DAP.

In addition, much of the BAU the BCITO undertakes is in support of disability, such as Individual Learning Plans, which facilitate the learner-specific strategy required to support success, verbal assessment where appropriate, to test knowledge, photographic compilation of work experience, night classes, and our marketing strategy, among many other aspects, all contribute to disability learner success.