

InternetNZ Funding Report

Community Accessibility Training



Experts in Digital Accessibility

Report prepared by Access Advisors
June 2026

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
The motivation.....	3
The delivery	3
The format	3
The attendees.....	3
The learnings	4
Looking ahead	4
Registration and participation	4
Engagement	4
Mix of organisations	5
Looking ahead	5
Training Content.....	6
Handouts	6
Outcome	7
Looking ahead	7
Training Style	8
Online vs Kanohi ki te kanohi	8
Length of sessions.....	8
Two consecutive mornings	9
Participant 'swag'	9
Looking ahead	10
Attendee Feedback	10
Most valuable thing learned	11
One key thing to apply immediately	11
Learning barriers	12
Appetite for more.....	13
Looking ahead	13
Venues	14
Looking ahead	14
Catering.....	15
Looking ahead	15
Financial overview	16
Costs and contribution	16
Value and impact	16
Budget.....	16
Training fees	17
Looking ahead	17
Access Advisors Team Experience	18
Benefits for Access Advisors.....	18
Team feedback	19
Summary & overall impact	20
Impact for InternetNZ	20
Impact for Access Advisors	20
Looking ahead	20

Executive Summary

This report outlines the delivery and outcomes of a digital accessibility training programme partially funded by InternetNZ. The purpose of this initiative was to make practical, high-quality accessibility training available to community organisations across Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly those who would not normally have the budget to access this type of support.

InternetNZ kindly donated \$40,500 as a contribution to the training programme and secured an extra \$5,000 from Spectrum Trust. Access Advisors prepared and delivered the training, absorbing the additional costs.

The motivation

Many community organisations are responsible for creating online content and services, but lack the knowledge, tools, or resources to ensure these are accessible for disabled people, older people, and others who may struggle with digital technology. The influx of applications for previous rounds of InternetNZ funding was also a good indication of interest and need for this kind of training.

The original proposal detailed this gap and the training aimed to build capability by providing simple, practical training that could be applied immediately. A key driver was removing cost as a barrier to participation, while still delivering training at a professional standard.

The delivery

Access Advisors delivered a series of training sessions across Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland, and online. The programme was structured as four 90-minute sessions delivered over two consecutive mornings, covering websites and social media, simple accessibility improvements, document accessibility, and multimedia content. The content was designed to focus on clear, achievable actions, supported by real examples, tools, and opportunities for discussion.

The format

The sessions were delivered over a series of dates, using a mix of kanohi ki te kanohi and online formats to maximise accessibility and reach. Venues were selected outside of central areas to engage local communities, and participants were supported with handouts, practical examples, and opportunities to ask questions. Catering and promotional items were also provided for in-person sessions to create a welcoming and engaging environment. The format was developed following a community survey.

The attendees



The full programme attracted 168 registrations, with 90 participants attending. The drop off in attendance was disappointing. But attendees represented a wide range of organisations, with strong participation from disability, health, and community sectors, alongside some representation from education, local government, and other areas.

This aligns well with the target audience identified in the proposal, particularly those working directly with people with access needs.

The learnings

Overall, the training was well received, with strong feedback on the quality, relevance, and practical value of the content. Participants left with increased awareness, useful tools, and clear next steps. At the same time, the programme highlighted potential areas for improvement, to address attendance rates, venue accessibility, promotional timing, and some logistical challenges.

Looking ahead

This initiative has demonstrated clear value for both participants and the wider sector, as well as strong alignment with InternetNZ's goals around digital inclusion. It has also shown that there is real demand for this type of training. We would welcome the opportunity to deliver a similar programme again, with some refinements to improve reach, engagement, and sustainability, while keeping the core focus on practical, community-focused accessibility training.

Registration and participation

The original proposal set a target of reaching 100 participants across the training programme. In total, we received 168 registrations, which indicated strong initial interest and engagement. However, the final number of attendees was 90, meaning we fell just short of the overall target. While we didn't reach the target, this is still a substantial level of engagement.

Engagement

A key factor influencing this outcome was a relatively high no-show rate of around 50 percent, particularly for the Auckland and online sessions where attendance was less than half of those registered. We did receive a number of apologies from participants who were unwell or had changing work priorities, but this does not fully account for the difference between registrations and attendance. This pattern was somewhat disappointing given the strong signals of interest gathered through the initial survey.

This experience reflects a broader challenge, as several attendees noted that they also struggle to secure attendance for free training within their own organisations. It suggests that while removing cost barriers encourages registrations, it may reduce commitment to attend.

Despite this, the programme did successfully engage a significant number of participants, with a strong representation from disability-focused organisations, which aligns well with the core audience identified in the proposal.

In addition, the registration process has provided us with a valuable database of organisations and contacts. This creates a strong foundation for possible future delivery, allowing for more targeted promotion and follow-up to improve attendance rates and overall reach.



Mix of organisations

The participant list shows a broad and diverse mix of organisations, which aligns well with the original goal of reaching community groups and those supporting people with a wide range of access needs. Several clear groupings emerged:

- Disability and accessibility organisations - indicates strong engagement from the core audience the training was designed to support.
- Health and wellbeing services - These organisations often support people with diverse access needs, making accessibility particularly relevant to their work.
- Community and social service organisations - This reflects good reach into grassroots and community-level services.
- Government, councils, and infrastructure organisations - This suggests growing awareness of accessibility responsibilities within public services.
- Education and research - This group is important for supporting long-term capability building.
- Iwi, Māori and community-led groups - This indicates good engagement with kaupapa Māori organisations, although there is likely further opportunity to strengthen reach in this area.
- Arts, recreation, sports, church and other sectors were also represented.

Overall, the participant mix demonstrates strong engagement from disability, health, and community sectors, with additional representation across government, education, and other areas. This diversity highlights both the wide relevance of digital accessibility and the opportunity to continue expanding reach into underrepresented sectors in future delivery.

Looking ahead

The experience from this programme provides a clear foundation for improving both reach and impact in future delivery. The programme successfully reached its core audience of disability, health, and community organisations.

A key focus will be reducing the gap between registrations and attendance to improve attendance and commitment. Introducing a small participation fee, deposit, or stronger confirmation process is likely to improve commitment. In addition, clearer communication about expectations and reminders closer to the session dates may help reduce no-shows.

While initial interest was strong, there is an opportunity to improve how we promote the training. Future delivery would benefit from earlier outreach, more locally focused promotion, and direct engagement with specific sectors and networks. The database of organisations developed through this programme provides a strong starting point for more targeted recruitment.

Venue selection and format had a clear impact on attendance. Future delivery could explore a more balanced mix of central and local venues, alongside continued online options, to reduce travel barriers while maintaining accessibility and engagement.

Refining the survey approach will help provide more consistent and actionable insights. This includes gathering feedback across all participant groups, collecting clearer data on willingness to pay, and linking feedback more directly to outcomes.

Training Content

The training content was developed in line with the original proposal, with a strong focus on delivering practical, accessible, and immediately useful guidance for community organisations. An initial survey, supported by InternetNZ, played a key role in shaping the content, ensuring it reflected the needs and priorities of the target audience. We developed a significant amount of new material specifically for these sessions, alongside selected existing content, allowing us to tailor the programme while drawing on proven approaches.

The overall approach was intentionally “less is more”, focusing on core concepts and simple, achievable actions rather than trying to cover too much. The sessions were designed to build understanding of accessibility across a range of areas, including websites and social media, simple improvements, document accessibility, and multimedia content.

Topics were introduction to accessibility, quick wins for web and social media, accessible multimedia and accessible documents. Participants left the sessions with practical tools, clear next steps, and the confidence to start making changes straight away. This approach aligned well with the goal of fostering sustainable, real-world application within organisations, rather than one-off fixes.

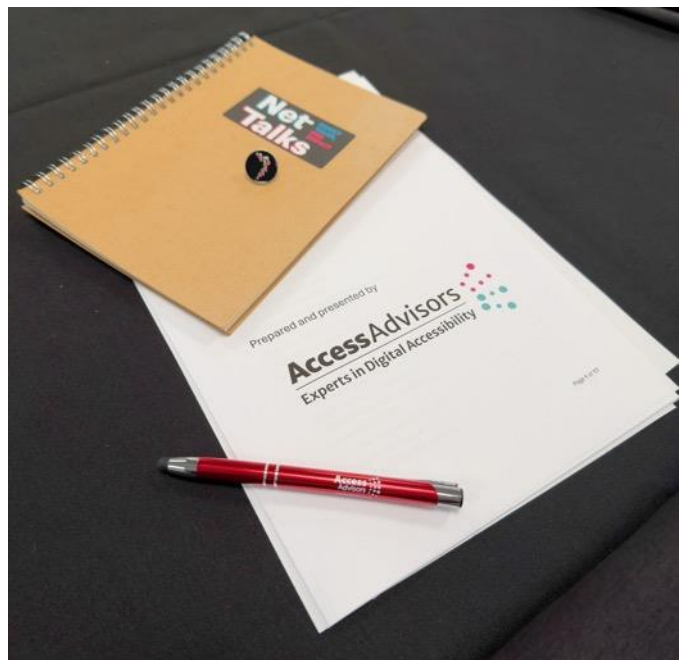
Feedback indicates that this approach was effective. Participants consistently highlighted the value of practical examples, clear explanations, and actionable advice. Many left with a greater awareness of access needs, along with specific tools and techniques they could apply immediately. More information about the feedback in in a later section.

The content was also strengthened over time, with the Christchurch sessions providing useful insights that were incorporated into later delivery. Through questions and discussion, we gained a deeper understanding of the specific challenges participants face, which will continue to inform future refinement of the material.

Handouts

We summarised the content into printed handouts for the in person attendees and email digital copies to everyone. The handouts supported learning content by providing a structured summary of key points from the sessions. These were co-branded with InternetNZ and Access Advisors, designed with accessibility in mind (including generous spacing for notes), and shared both digitally and in print. They were generally well received and seen as useful resources.

A small number of participants requested alternative formats, such as Word documents to enable easier text resizing, and there is an opportunity to strengthen these resources further by including more complete information and direct links. However, the level of detail would need to be balanced with commercial needs to not give away all of our knowledge.



Participant Quotes

- “Course notes were pre-shared which was helpful to explain what we were going to cover.”

Outcome

Overall, the content successfully met the needs of the audience and delivered on the intent of the programme. For future delivery, there is an opportunity to build on this by incorporating more hands-on elements, providing more detailed demonstrations, refining supporting materials, and continuing to evolve the content based on participant feedback and real-world application.

Looking ahead

There is a clear opportunity to build on the strength of the content while refining it further to better meet participant needs. Feedback and delivery experience suggest a shift towards more practical, hands-on learning would add value, with additional time spent demonstrating tools and working through real examples. Participants were particularly interested in seeing how accessibility works in practice, so increasing the use of live demonstrations and guided activities would help deepen understanding.

There is also scope to strengthen the supporting materials. Providing more complete handouts, including direct links to tools and resources, and offering them in multiple accessible formats (such as Word as well as PDF) would improve usability and extend the impact beyond the sessions. Ensuring interpreters and accessibility supports are consistently well integrated into delivery (for example, managing screen layouts effectively) is another area to refine.

Finally, continuing to evolve the content based on participant questions and real-world challenges will be important. The sessions generated valuable insight into how organisations are approaching accessibility, and future versions of the training could incorporate more tailored examples for different sectors and levels of experience. This would help ensure the content remains relevant, practical, and responsive to the needs of the communities it is designed to support.



Caption: Ciara from InternetNZ and other attendees during one of the exercise.

Training Style

Designing the overall training involved balancing participant preferences, accessibility, and practical delivery considerations. To help with the balancing and decision making we did an initial survey about the preferred style and content. We approached potential participants from our networks and people who had previously applied for INZ grant funding. We received around 50 responses.

Based on this feedback, we developed training that aimed to be flexible and responsive: a mix of online and kanohi ki te kanohi delivery, structured as four 90-minute sessions, delivered over two consecutive mornings. While no single format proved perfect for all participants, this approach allowed us to test different options and learn what worked best in practice.

Online vs Kanohi ki te kanohi



Offering both online and kanohi ki te kanohi sessions aligned with our intention to make the training as accessible and inclusive as possible. As expected, face to face sessions supported stronger relationship building, made it easier to read the room, and enabled more natural discussion. However, the online sessions attracted higher registration numbers, likely due to the ease of attending without travel and fewer time or location constraints.

The online format also had some unexpected benefits. Interaction through the chat function worked well, although

participation tended to be dominated by a small number of attendees. For future delivery, we would consider using tools like the Zoom Q&A function to better manage and distribute participation.

While a hybrid model could potentially offer the best of both worlds, it would introduce additional logistical complexity and may increase the risk of lower engagement or no-shows. Overall, the mix of formats was valuable, but reinforced that different participants have different access needs and preferences.

Participant Quotes

- "I found the online sessions much easier to attend with my workload."
- "Really appreciated being able to talk things through in person and hear others' experiences."

Length of sessions

The training was structured into four 90-minute sessions as well as intros and breaks, which proved to be an effective balance. This length allowed enough time to explore topics in a meaningful way without overwhelming participants.

It created space for introductions and questions at either end of each session, supporting engagement and understanding. General feedback and delivery experience suggest that this session length was broadly appropriate for the content and audience. The online participants were the only group that found the length a little too long. Four hours in one online session can be problematic for many.

Participant Quotes

- "The timing felt about right, enough time to go into detail without it dragging on."
- "I liked that there was space for questions at the start and end."

Two consecutive mornings

Delivering the sessions over two consecutive mornings reflected the strongest preference expressed in the initial survey. This structure helped maintain continuity between sessions and supported participant focus.

However, it did come with some trade-offs. In-person sessions, increased delivery costs and created challenges for participants travelling from outside the local area, as it required multiple days of attendance. But the format worked well for those who could attend locally or online. It may be worth exploring more flexible scheduling options in future to better accommodate those with travel or time constraints.

Participant Quotes

- "Two mornings in a row worked well for me, it kept the momentum going."
- "Hard to commit to two days back to back, especially having to travel in."

Participant 'swag'

With the help of Internet NZ, attendees at the in person sessions received a range of promotional items. These included InternetNZ branded notebooks and lapel pins, and Access Advisors branded pens, which were placed alongside handouts at each session. We also provided attendees with information about our services, helping to extend the impact of the sessions beyond the training itself.

Swag was also used creatively during the sessions as incentives to encourage participation, such as sharing stories, examples, and questions. Items including mugs, bags, speakers, and hats helped create energy in the room and contributed to a more interactive environment. This approach not only supported engagement but also created an additional, unexpected benefit for participants.



From an organisational perspective, the use of swag provided a valuable marketing opportunity. It increased visibility for both InternetNZ and Access Advisors and prompted further connection with attendees. In Christchurch, for example, participants were motivated to share their own business cards and organisational information after seeing ours, creating informal networking opportunities.

Providing “swag” to participants aligned well with the original proposal’s focus on creating an engaging and positive learning experience, while also supporting awareness of both InternetNZ and Access Advisors. These unexpected items were well received and added a tangible and enjoyable element to the training experience.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead, there are opportunities to build on this approach. This could include developing Access Advisors branded notebooks, encouraging participants to bring their own organisational materials to share, and exploring sponsorship from additional partners such as Spectrum to support or expand the range of items provided.

We would likely continue offering a mix of online and face to face options to meet different access needs and keep sessions to around 90 minutes to allow depth without overloading participants. We would also review online interaction to improve participation (for example using Q&A instead of chat) and the consecutive mornings format, balancing continuity and travel / time commitments.

Attendee Feedback

Gathering participant feedback was a key component of the programme, to ensure we could assess impact and continuously improve delivery. A feedback survey was shared immediately after each session and again in follow-up communications. Overall, we achieved a reasonable response rate across all locations, with particularly high engagement from Christchurch participants.

The quantitative survey results were consistently positive across all regions and delivery formats. As shown in the following table, with rounding, participants consistently rated either 6 or 7 out of 7, indicating that the training successfully met participant needs and expectations. The length of sessions question received a balanced rating (4.34 – too short > too long), suggesting that the length of the sessions were just about perfect. Online participants tended to suggest it was slightly too long.

Survey Question	Scale	CHC (n=11)	WGN (n=6)	AKL (n=5)	Online (n=12)	Total (n=34)	Rounded
Would you recommend this training to others?	1/7	7.00	6.83	6.8	6.83	6.87	7
How knowledgeable were your instructors?	1/7	7.00	6.83	6.8	7.00	6.91	7
How clearly was the course content explained?	1/7	6.64	5.67	6.4	6.75	6.36	6
How well did you understand the content?	1/7	5.91	5.83	6.2	6.83	6.19	6
How relevant was the training to your needs?	1/7	6.50	6.17	6.4	6.92	6.50	6
How did you feel about the length of the sessions?	1/7	4.55	3.67	4.4	4.75	4.34	4

Notably, online participants reported slightly higher levels of understanding and relevance, likely reflecting the accessibility and convenience of that format. They also received the most refined version of the training after three previous iterations.

Feedback also confirmed that the training delivered meaningful outcomes for attendees. As explored in later sections, participants left with a greater awareness of different access needs, increased confidence in using free accessibility tools, and a range of simple, actionable improvements they could apply immediately in their work.

These outcomes align strongly with the original intent of the programme to build capability and support practical change within community organisations.

Most valuable thing learned

Feedback from the survey showed clear themes that matched with what our training objectives were. The information/content that seemed most valuable to people included:

- Practical “quick wins” and step-by-step techniques were strongly valued as actionable guidance they can implement straight away. This builds confidence and momentum.
- Accessibility for documents and PDFs - Many participants have direct responsibility for documents, so this felt highly relevant.
- Tools and accessibility checking - Participants valued learning about tools they can use straight away. This reduced perceived effort and uncertainty.
- Understanding lived experience and assistive technology was a standout theme emotionally and cognitively. This shifted mindsets and built empathy, making accessibility feel real.
- Extending beyond web to social media, multimedia and document accessibility was appreciated. This broadened understanding of accessibility across channels.
- Alt text and visual accessibility came up repeatedly as a specific learning point, once that is both practical and confidence-building. Learning about alt text helped with overcoming fear or uncertainty about doing it wrong.
- Increased awareness and a mindset shift was clear, with a significant change in how people think about accessibility. Realising accessibility is achievable and understanding the range of access needs is critical for long-term behaviour change.
- Busting common myths provided reassurance and motivation. Participants knowing they are not “lagging behind,” and feeling supported rather than judged. This helps reduce resistance and overwhelm.

One key thing to apply immediately

People left the course most ready to add alt text, fix headings, use accessibility checkers, start with simple changes, and apply all of this immediately in their own work. The top five “one key thing” people can apply straight away were:

1. Add alt text to images

This is the strongest and most consistent takeaway across the feedback. People repeatedly stated they will:

- Add alt text to websites, documents, and social media
- Improve how they write descriptions
- Apply it immediately to current content



2. Use proper heading structure and formatting

This is clearly the second most actionable takeaway. People highlighted they will:

- Fix heading structures in documents and webpages
- Use styles instead of manual formatting
- Correct issues caused by AI or content platforms

3. Use accessibility checkers and tools

Third, is the use of free tools to explore accessibility of websites and documents. People feel ready to:

- Use WAVE on their websites
- Run document accessibility checkers
- Act on the results straight away

4. Start with simple, quick wins

This is a strong behavioural shift rather than a single skill. People took away that:

- Accessibility does not have to be complex
- Small changes (alt text, headings) make a big difference
- They can act now without needing budget or specialist tools

5. Apply accessibility improvements to their own work immediately

It also came through that people felt more comfortable making some improvements on their own where previously they thought it was too difficult or out of their control.

People specifically said they feel they can:

- Update websites, forms and social media
- Improve templates and documents
- Review existing content and fix issues
- Share knowledge with colleagues.

Learning barriers

Participant feedback highlighted a few areas where people experienced challenges, providing useful insight for refining future delivery.



A key theme was that some concepts, particularly around technical aspects of accessibility, were new and at times difficult to fully grasp within the session timeframe. While the 90-minute format allowed for some depth, it also meant that participants occasionally needed more time to process and apply what they were learning.

Another area of challenge was understanding how accessibility principles translate into practice within their own organisations. Some participants found it difficult to directly connect the training content to their specific tools, systems, or workflows, particularly if they were at an early stage of their accessibility journey. This reinforces the need for more practical, contextual examples and opportunities to apply learning in real time. Spending more time on fewer topics may be an option for the future. This would allow more time for participants to apply their learning immediately.

There were some challenges related to the delivery format. In online sessions, managing participation through chat meant that not all voices were equally heard, which may have limited opportunities for clarification. In-person, issues such as venue acoustics or background noise occasionally made it harder for participants to hear clearly, which impacted understanding.

Finally, managing the attendee's different needs was also mentioned. For example, more advanced participants wanting more advanced content, engaging with participants with different communication needs, different lighting/sound/temperature needs surfaced new insights but also underscored the complexity of delivering and implementing truly inclusive content to a diverse group.

Overall, these challenges are a positive signal of engagement with complex and important material. They point to opportunities to further strengthen the training through clearer scaffolding of content, more practical application, improved facilitation of discussion, and continued attention to inclusive delivery.

Appetite for more

Participant survey feedback and discussion during the sessions highlighted a strong appetite for more and deeper learning across a range of accessibility topics. While the training provided a solid introduction, many attendees indicated they would value more time to explore specific areas in greater depth, particularly practical application within their own roles and organisations. This included interest in more advanced techniques, deeper understanding of tools such as screen readers, and further guidance on how to embed accessibility into everyday processes and content creation.

A consistent theme was that the sessions felt like a starting point rather than an end point. Many participants asked when further training would be available, expressing a clear desire for follow-up sessions or more advanced modules.

There was also strong interest in accessing the training materials after the sessions. Several attendees requested copies of the slides so they could share learnings with their wider teams and support internal capability building. For commercial reasons we chose to provide the handouts but not the slides or videos, in the hope that some of these organisations would approach us for paid services.

This feedback reinforces both the demand for ongoing learning and the opportunity to develop a more structured training pathway. Considering the commercial realities, providing follow-up sessions, supplementary resources, and shareable materials would help extend the impact of the initial training and support participants to continue their accessibility journey beyond the sessions themselves.

Participant Quotes

- “Great course, thank you! Definitely would be interested in another course in the future.”
- “I feel like there could have been a part 2. The instructors clearly had the knowledge for more.”
- “I hope more organisations ... have the opportunity to attend sessions like these.”

Looking ahead

- Provide more practical, hands-on examples that show how to apply concepts in real-world contexts
- Allow more time for questions and discussion, especially for complex or technical topics
- Improve facilitation of online interaction so more participants can contribute
- Continue refining delivery to ensure all participants can hear and follow clearly in different environments
- Include clearer links between the training content and participants' day-to-day tools and responsibilities
- Refine the feedback survey to capture all relevant data from all attendees
- Send survey link before end of session, in immediate follow up email, in reminder email one week later.

Venues

The venues for the training sessions were selected to align with our original proposal, which prioritised reaching local community groups by hosting events outside of central city locations. Budget and availability were also key constraints in venue selection

We delivered sessions in Christchurch at the Wigram Airforce Museum, Wellington at a Lower Hutt sports centre, and in South Auckland at Blind Low Vision NZ's Homai campus. An additional session was planned for the Taupō Conference Centre, but unfortunately was cancelled due to low registrations.



Overall, the venues met our goal of engaging local communities and providing suitable spaces, although feedback highlighted the usual trade-offs around location, access, and environment. A key learning was the importance of public transport access, which had a noticeable impact on participant experience and attendance. More robust directions and parking info might also help.

While Wigram and Lower Hutt were both described as excellent facilities with ample free parking and a welcome opportunity to “get out of town,” travel challenges emerged, particularly around public transport links in Christchurch and Wellington. The Homai venue was also identified as less suitable for this type of training due to its large size and the additional setup required by our team.

Attendee feedback suggested that while some appreciated the quieter, community-focused locations, others found them a bit of a drive. This reinforces that participant experience varied depending on individual travel needs.

Participant Quotes

- “Air conditioning was quite loud which made hearing a bit difficult at times. location easy to get to and ample free parking a bonus”
- “My only comment would be to have this training at a more central location, as it was approximately 40 minutes from central Auckland by car.”

Looking ahead

Future venue selection will focus on achieving a better balance between accessibility, convenience, and local engagement. While non-central locations supported the goal of reaching community groups, there is a clear need to ensure these venues are still easy to access. In particular, we will prioritise locations with strong public transport links, while still considering the benefits of free parking for those travelling by car.

We will take a more cautious approach to booking remote venues, ensuring there is clear demand before committing. A more balanced mix of central and local venues may help improve attendance while still supporting community reach. Greater attention will also be given to the suitability of the space itself, including acoustics, layout, and ease of setup, to ensure it fully supports the training experience. We will strengthen the information provided to participants ahead of time, including clearer directions, transport options, and parking details. This will help reduce uncertainty and make it easier for attendees to plan their journey. Overall, these changes aim to improve accessibility, increase attendance, and create a smoother experience for both participants and the delivery team.

Catering

Providing catering for the in-person sessions aligned with our original proposal to create a welcoming and supportive learning environment for participants attending a four-hour training. We chose to offer kai to support participants to stay engaged across the full four-hour session and to create a welcoming environment. We asked about dietary requirements when people registered.

In practice, the approach varied by location. In Christchurch, catering was included with the venue hire and was well received. However, there was significantly more food than needed, and special dietary requirements still needed to be catered for separately. In Wellington and Auckland, food was organised by Access Advisors staff, with Spectrum's much appreciated contribution helping to offset cost.

Participant feedback was very positive overall, with many noting that catering was a “nice surprise” and appreciating the variety provided. Some feedback highlighted the importance of continuing to offer options for different dietary needs, including gluten free and more plant-based or dairy free choices. While the food quality was consistently good it created a noticeable logistical burden for the team, particularly around sourcing, collection, and setup. A simpler approach for future sessions will be more sustainable.



Participant Quotes

- “I wasn't expecting catering so it was a nice surprise!”
- “More plant based/dairy free options would have been nice.”

Looking ahead

Future catering will focus on balancing participant experience with simplicity and sustainability. While catering was well received, it was not expected, and the effort required to organise it was disproportionate to the benefit.

A simpler, more consistent approach will be prioritised, such as providing tea and coffee or using delivered catering options where appropriate. This will reduce organiser workload while still supporting participant comfort. Where food is provided, we will ensure that common dietary needs, including gluten free, dairy free, and plant-based options, are clearly catered for and communicated in advance.

We will also take a more deliberate approach to quantities to avoid over-catering, and ensure that catering plans better reflect expected attendance. Clear communication ahead of sessions about what will be provided will help set expectations and avoid confusion.

Overall, future decisions will focus on reducing complexity while maintaining a positive and inclusive participant experience.

Financial overview

As outlined in the original proposal, the primary goal of this programme was to make high-quality digital accessibility training available to community organisations at no or very low cost. Historically, this has not been feasible for Access Advisors due to the costs involved, including venue hire, catering, and staff time. Without external support, these costs would need to be passed directly onto participants, creating a barrier for many of the groups we aimed to reach. This approach enabled us to reach a significantly larger number of organisations than would otherwise have been possible.

Securing funding was therefore essential to delivering this initiative. We received \$40,500 in funding from InternetNZ, along with an additional \$5,000 from Spectrum Trust through connections facilitated by InternetNZ. InternetNZ also contributed in-kind support through promotional items and staff time, which we appreciated. This combined support enabled us to deliver the training at no cost to participants, particularly charity and community groups.

Costs and contribution

The original budget for the programme was \$45,500, which we kept very tight to match the funding available. However, the actual cost of delivery was approximately \$80,000, meaning Access Advisors contributed around \$35,000 in additional time and resources. While it was anticipated that this would likely cost more than the funding provided and we did not expect to make a profit from this work, this level of contribution is not sustainable without ongoing funding or a change in delivery model.

We expected that some of these additional costs would be offset through longer-term benefits such as increased visibility, strengthened relationships, and potential future work with participants. Early indications suggest this is beginning to occur, but it does not fully cover the upfront cost of delivery.

Value and impact

When viewed in terms of reach and impact, the programme delivered strong value for investment. The training reached approximately 80 organisations, compared to the original grant model where \$100,000 supported 10 organisations at a cost of \$10,000 each. This programme reached around eight times as many organisations for less than half of the earlier grant budget.

Based on the planned budget, the cost per organisation was approximately \$600, with the actual cost closer to \$1,000 per organisation. Initial feedback indicates that participants gained meaningful knowledge, practical skills, and increased confidence, suggesting strong value for this level of investment.

Budget

Activity	Budgeted Cost	Actual Cost
Planning and preparation	\$5,000	\$30,000
Promotion and outreach	\$5,000	\$5,000
Training and delivery	\$30,000	
Facilitators		\$25,000
Venue/Catering		\$2,000
NZSL Interpreter		\$3,000
Accommodation/Transport/Meals		\$10,000
Printing	\$500	\$500
Follow-up and support	\$5,000	\$5,000
	\$45,500	\$80,500

Training fees

As outlined in the original proposal, we offered all sessions free of charge to remove barriers and support participation from community groups. This aligned well with our goals and helped attract strong interest, particularly for online sessions. However, the lack of financial commitment likely contributed to lower attendance and last-minute drop-offs.

This is notable given the value of the training. Six hours of comparable professional training would typically cost \$500 or more per person, while equivalent in-house delivery for corporate clients is around \$12,000. Offering the sessions free was appropriate in this context, but it is not sustainable without ongoing external funding.

We explored willingness to pay with online participants, but responses were limited (12 people) and mixed, providing no clear direction. We also did not gather this data from in-person attendees, which is a gap. Despite this, there was some indication that organisations with available budget would be willing to contribute something towards the cost.

For future delivery, introducing a modest fee would be beneficial. This would need to balance accessibility with commitment—low enough for community groups, but high enough to represent a genuine investment and reduce no-shows. Even a small fee could help offset costs while maintaining wide access.

As a for-purpose business, we aim to make this a financially viable offering. Charging full market rates would likely reduce participation from the intended audience and shift the programme toward more commercial organisations. While this would improve financial sustainability, it would limit accessibility and reduce the broader community impact that was a core goal of the initiative.

Looking ahead

While the funding model worked well for this initiative and enabled significant reach and impact, it is not sustainable as a standalone approach. We cannot continue to deliver this programme at a loss, and future delivery will need to balance accessibility with financial viability.

A blended model is the most practical way forward. This would combine continued funding or sponsorship, such as support from InternetNZ, alongside a modest participant fee. Introducing a fee, even at a low level, would help improve commitment and attendance, while contributing to delivery costs. If a similar level of funding support were available in future, we could use participant fees to help offset the additional costs currently absorbed by Access Advisors.

There is also an opportunity to introduce a more flexible pricing structure. A sliding scale approach would allow organisations with greater resources to contribute more, while keeping costs low and accessible for smaller community groups. A “pay it forward” or gifting model could further support this, enabling some participants to contribute towards the cost of others attending.

At the same time, we will continue to look for ways to manage costs more effectively, including refining delivery, venues, and logistics. This will help ensure the programme remains both impactful and repeatable.

Overall, the next iteration of this programme will focus on maintaining the strong community impact achieved, while moving towards a more sustainable and scalable financial model.

Access Advisors Team Experience

Delivering this programme was a valuable and rewarding experience for the Access Advisors team, both professionally and personally. The sessions were led primarily by Julius, who delivered most of the training content, supported by Ross who focused on visual elements and document accessibility. Chandra provided facilitation support, shared practical stories, and managed logistics such as catering, AV and IT setup, and coordination with venue staff. This collaborative approach worked well, and delivery improved noticeably over time as the team refined both the content and the flow of sessions.



The programme also created opportunities for wider team involvement. Katherine and Kirsten attended the Christchurch sessions, which sit outside their core roles, but provided useful exposure and learning that will support their work going forward. Having members of the InternetNZ team attend in Wellington and online was also a highlight, reinforcing the value and relevance of the training.

A consistent theme across the team was how much was learned from participants. This included gaining a deeper understanding of the diverse access needs people experience and how these show up in real-world contexts. For example, one participant's reminder to "listen with care" highlighted the importance of communication in accessibility, while another experience of presenting to someone who is Deaf prompted reflection on delivering inclusive content in new ways. There were also practical learnings, such as the importance of having technology fully set up and ready before participants arrive, and seeing first-hand how tools like screen readers interpret inaccessible documents.

Overall, the experience was both validating and motivating. It confirmed there is strong demand for this type of training and reinforced the importance of making it more widely available. It also provided a long-awaited opportunity for the team to deliver training into the community, something they have been wanting to do for some time, and strengthened their confidence and capability in doing so.

Benefits for Access Advisors

As anticipated in the original proposal, delivering this training created a range of meaningful benefits for Access Advisors beyond the immediate delivery of the sessions themselves. Importantly, it enabled us to offer high-quality training to audiences that would typically find it financially out of reach, extending our impact into parts of the community we have not previously been able to engage at this scale.

The programme significantly raised our profile with participants and their organisations, increasing awareness of our work and strengthening our position within the accessibility sector. This has already translated into tangible opportunities, with several strong leads emerging, including Corrections, a mental health navigation service, and Eldernet. In addition to these leads, we have seen an increase in ongoing conversations with organisations who are now exploring how they can improve their accessibility practices.

From a capability perspective, the sessions provided valuable insights into the real-world questions and challenges faced by participants. This has directly informed and refined our training content, making it more practical, relevant, and responsive to audience needs. The training also generated a wide range of content for our social media channels, helping to amplify reach and reinforce our expertise.

Overall, this initiative has strengthened our reputation and credibility, increasing our mana within the digital accessibility training space. It has demonstrated both the demand for this type of training and the value of making it more widely accessible, while also supporting the longer-term sustainability and growth of the business.

Team feedback

Chandra (Managing Director)

My biggest win was learning so much from the participants about their specific access needs and their organisation's needs. One of our participants had a speech issue and her statement that she often needs to remind people to "listen with care" will stick with me always.

Ross (Operations Manager)

The big learning for me was about the importance of being on time and having the tech set up properly before people arrive. On the plus side it was a huge validation that there are people out there that really need this type of content.

Julius (Advisor & Trainer)

I really enjoyed building relationships with these people and having the opportunity to tell people about accessibility. I was also humbled to be presenting information to someone who was Deaf and not knowing what she might miss. I'm used to being the disabled person, I'm new to being in the room with someone who can't hear.

Katherine (Executive Magician)

I really enjoyed attending the Christchurch training. Even more, I enjoyed the opportunity to offer this kind of training to people who really appreciated it as we've been wanting to do it for so long.

Kirsten (Social Media Coordinator)

The biggest thing for me was hearing how a screen reader interprets an inaccessible pdf document. This will help me moving forward and understand why styles in word are so important.

Summary & overall impact

This programme successfully delivered on the intent of the original proposal, making high-quality, practical digital accessibility training available to community organisations that would not normally be able to access it. This programme delivered high-quality accessibility training to a large number of organisations at a relatively low cost per organisation, demonstrating strong value for investment.

The training itself was well received across all locations and formats, with strong feedback showing that participants found the content valuable, clear, and immediately useful. The focus on simple, achievable actions worked well, and the ability to refine the content after the Christchurch pilot strengthened delivery over time.

Engagement during sessions was high, with lots of questions and discussion both during and after each session. Participants appreciated the practical nature of the training, the handouts, and the supportive environment. The addition of swag created a positive and memorable experience, adding both energy to the sessions and a useful marketing benefit.

Impact for InternetNZ

This investment enabled a significant increase in reach and impact compared to traditional grant models. For a relatively modest investment, the programme supported around 80 organisations to build practical accessibility skills, at a much lower cost per organisation than previous approaches.

The feedback indicates that real learning and behaviour change has occurred, with participants leaving more confident and better equipped to make their digital content accessible. This represents strong value for money and meaningful progress towards improving accessibility across the community sector.

Impact for Access Advisors

For Access Advisors, the programme delivered both impact and growth. It allowed us to reach new audiences, strengthen our reputation, and build relationships with organisations we would not typically engage due to cost barriers. It also improved our content, increased our visibility, and generated new leads and opportunities.

While the programme required a financial contribution from us, it has strengthened our position in the accessibility space and demonstrated the demand for this type of training.

Looking ahead

If it is possible, we would welcome the opportunity to deliver this programme again next year.

The core model works well and has clearly demonstrated value, but there are some areas we would refine. In particular, we would focus on improving attendance rates, selecting more accessible or better balanced locations, strengthening local promotion, refining survey and feedback processes, and reducing logistical challenges such as AV setup and catering. We would also revisit the cost model, likely introducing a small fee alongside continued funding support to improve sustainability and participant commitment.

Overall, this has been a highly worthwhile initiative with clear benefits for participants, strong alignment with shared goals, and a solid foundation to build on in future. Thank you for your support in making this a reality, for us and the many organisations you have helped.