Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People logo


Summary of the MEAL Strategic Framework

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This paper provides a plain language summary of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (MEAL) Detailed Strategic Framework.

# What is the MEAL Strategic Framework?

MEAL stands for Monitoring, Evaluation, Analysis and Learning. The MEAL Strategic Framework sets out the steps required to create a Monitoring, Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (MEAL) approach based on Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles.

The Strategy is grounded in a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This includes developing and honouring meaningful partnerships with tāngata whaikaha Māori (disabled Māori) and whānau at all levels as the transformed system unfolds. It also includes making sure that our monitoring, evaluation, analysis and learning systems do what they can to fix the inequalities that tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau face in health and wellbeing, because of our disability support system. The key principles of MEAL ensure mana enhancing, self-determination and voice are at the heart of all changes and can be embedded in current and future systems.

# Who developed the MEAL Strategic Framework?

The MEAL Strategic Framework was co-developed by disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, whānau and the Crown. This is known as a ‘partnership approach’, which is part of the new way of working for Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People. The team placed a strong emphasis on gathering and listening to the voices of disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau when developing the strategy.

# The case for change

In Aotearoa New Zealand the disability rights movement has been calling for changes to the disability support system for decades. After many years of trialling different approaches, the Government has agreed to rolling out a new approach called Enabling Good Lives (EGL) across the whole country. The EGL approach is based on a set of eight principles. You can learn more about these at <https://www.enablinggoodlives.co.nz/about-egl/egl-approach/principles/> .

Monitoring, evaluation, analysis and learning approaches are an important part of this change. We need an EGL-aligned approach to all of our systems in order to make real change for disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau. This is because some of the existing approaches to monitoring, evaluation, analysis, and learning aren’t enabling disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau to have choice and control over their own lives.

# What does an EGL-aligned approach look like?

The EGL approach is about shifting power, authority and resources for disability supports to disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau. Work which the Crown (or Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People) does needs to reflect and embrace what is meaningful for disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau. In the MEAL context, this means that there needs to be independent voice mechanisms, which are mechanisms for gathering the multiple and varied voices of the disability community free from fear of negative responses from those who provide and fund services. It also means that disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau need to be given adequate resources and information to help define and contribute to the outcomes that matter to them, so they can hold the system to account as it transforms.

An EGL-aligned approach to monitoring, evaluation, analysis and learning requires:

* Appropriate resourcing of disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau
* Leadership by and for disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau
* Partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi
* Shared accountability, responsibility and governance between disabled people and whānau, tāngata whaikaha, and the Crown (a tripartite approach).

The MEAL Strategic Framework builds on the capacity of disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau as commissioners and designers of monitoring and evaluation, rather than just participants. This means there will be a focus on using monitoring, evaluation, analysis and learning approaches which are disabled / tāngata whaikaha Māori - led, and which have a strong presence of disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau.

# The MEAL Strategic Shifts

The MEAL strategic framework is based on four strategic shifts. The shifts are inter-related and reinforce each other. Together, the strategic shifts aim to resource disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau – led monitoring, evaluation, analysis and learning. This is done to ensure that insights and improvements in these areas can be used as part of policy development and the practice of disability services throughout New Zealand.

The strategic shifts are:

* Shift 1 – Disability system monitoring, evaluation, analysis, and learning is led, designed, and conducted by and with disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau in partnership with the Crown.
* Shift 2 – Disability system monitoring, evaluation, analysis, and learning approaches are guided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
* Shift 3 – Disability system monitoring, evaluation, analysis, and learning approaches provide a lever to create better outcomes for disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau.
* Shift 4 - Disability system monitoring, evaluation, analysis, and learning approaches use effective and appropriate tools and systems.

# MEAL Success Indicators

We’ll know we have done a good job with implementing MEAL when we see:

* Disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau as leaders in the development and implementation of the MEAL approach
* A direct link between independent voice mechanisms and improvements in Whaikaha and the wider disability support system
* Increased cultural appropriateness and responsiveness of monitoring and evaluation approaches, tools and processes
* increased alignment of existing monitoring and evaluation to the EGL principles
* Monitoring, evaluation, analysis and learning systems being held truly accountable to disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau.

# The Insights Alliance

It is proposed that the implementation of the MEAL approach will be overseen by a partnership group called the Insights Alliance. The Insights Alliance includes people with a range of expertise in the monitoring, evaluation, analysis and learning space, including disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, Pacific disabled people, whānau and Crown officials. The Insights Alliance is one of the independent voice mechanisms which ensures that the voice of the community leads the work of Whaikaha, and which enables shared accountability for system transformation.

# The MEAL Action Plan

The Strategic Plan includes a table of indicative actions, which set out actions which are likely to be taken. A detailed action plan for how this will be designed and implemented is currently under development as at October 2022.

Implementation of the MEAL approach will happen alongside the EGL system transformation implementation. Some aspects of the approach are already being implemented, while others will require more planning and development.