



Image credit: CPL

A generic position description for the current **Frontline Leader**

Ability First Australia is undertaking a project that defines the role, competencies, and capabilities of the Frontline Leader. Spread over 4 stages, and scheduled for completion by June 2021, we anticipate this project will have a profound impact on the long-term viability of the NDIS: facilitating career pathways, informing recruitment practices, and increasing capacity for leaders to be successful in their roles. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. Visit www.dss.gov.au for more information.

FRONTLINE LEADERSHIP ROLE CLARITY PROJECT: A PATHWAY TO ATTRACTING, RETAINING AND GROWING A SKILLED NDIS WORKFORCE.

The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has brought significant change to providers, workers and participants in the disability sector.

As part of these changes, the roles and responsibilities for the Frontline Leader and many other positions in provider organisations have changed considerably. Frontline Leaders are essentially staff in a provider organisation who directly manage/lead the delivery of services by Disability Support Workers (DSW's) and associated frontline staff.

Ability First Australia (Ability First) and its members believe that investment in frontline leadership is crucial to the long-term viability and success of the NDIS. In 2019, Ability First was funded through the Department of Social Services' NDIS Jobs and Market Fund to undertake a project to define the role, capacity and capabilities of the Frontline Leader to inform organisation and job design, recruitment practices and training methodology. The project has four stages and it will be completed by June 2021.

THE FIRST STAGE of the project documents the "Current State" role for the Frontline Leader. This document is one of six resources on the "Current State" published on the Ability First website:

- Project background
- Major changes since the NDIS was introduced
- Current daily, weekly and adhoc tasks of Frontline Leaders
- Participant and carer views on their interactions with Frontline Leaders
- Frontline Leaders views on how their role will change in the future
- Generic position description for the Frontline Leader

THE SECOND STAGE of the project will include developing a Position Description for the future Frontline Leader role as well as a Capability Framework. There will also be tools developed to help Frontline Leaders assess any skills and knowledge development that will be needed as their role evolves.

THE THIRD STAGE of this project will focus on developing a series of online tools as well as a career and training framework for Frontline Leaders. These tools will be tested by a number of providers before they are publicly released as part of stage four. A series of resources will be published on the [Ability First website](http://www.abilityfirst.org.au) throughout the life of the project.



How we collected the data

One of the major objectives of this project was to develop a generic position description for the current Frontline Leader. The collection of position descriptions revealed a range of definitions existed for the Frontline Leader role, and so the role of the Frontline Leader was outlined as follows:

Frontline workers as employees who directly interact with customers, and frontline leaders as the first level of management that manage the day to day operations of frontline workers in a disability organization.

A parallel analysis of current position descriptions for Frontline Leaders demonstrated that their responsibilities varied considerably between service lines and providers.

For the purpose of establishing a baseline to work from, a generic position description was developed to capture the most common elements of a Frontline Leader role in relation to responsibility and accountabilities.

Once the “future state” role has been developed, the new position description will reflect the required changes in responsibilities, accountabilities and it will also incorporate a series of performance measures. It is possible that the project will require a set of position descriptions that reflect service lines, customer complexity, geographic locations, workforce size etc. but that will be assessed in the next stage of this project.

Assumptions made in developing the generic position description

A large number of disability service providers have two levels of management within the Frontline Leader role, a team leader and a team manager or coordinator. It is apparent that there is no consistency in the role titles used to distinguish between the two levels, therefore the baseline (or current state) generic position description incorporates the role and responsibilities of both.

As the project clarifies the current role and responsibilities of the Frontline Leader, future position descriptions will reflect the differences between these levels. It has also been identified that each organisation provides a different range of centralised supports to the Frontline Leader, examples of this include (but are not limited to) complaints management, rostering services and performance management of staff. For the purpose of the current state position description it has been assumed that whilst not all Frontline Leaders are required to carry out all tasks due to some centralised support, they would be required at a minimum to understand the processes. The more common responsibilities have therefore been included in the generic Frontline Leader position description.

Methodology

The approach taken to developing the generic current state Frontline Leader position description was as follows:

- Copies of current position descriptions were requested from all AFA member organisations.
- Current advertised Frontline Leader positions were reviewed to ensure that a wide range of roles and responsibilities from organisations was included.
- The current Frontline Leader position descriptions from AFA members were reviewed.
- Additional position descriptions from other disability service providers were reviewed.
- The DILO and WILO reports provided by Frontline Leaders as well as responses from twelve workshops were used to identify and confirm key responsibilities of Frontline Leaders.
- The most common responsibilities, accountabilities and capabilities were identified.
- Each task/responsibility was then mapped according to how many times it appeared in position descriptions (frequently, often, sometimes, rarely).
- All ‘frequent’ tasks were included in the generic Frontline Leader position description.
- All other tasks (often, sometimes, rarely) were documented for use in Stage 2 of the project.

The following table includes all of the tasks/responsibilities that were not included in the generic Frontline Leader position description.

Task	Sometimes	Often	Rarely
Ensure customer appointments are made, managed and followed up where appropriate	✓		
Organise general office cleaning, maintenance and/or servicing requirements		✓	
Actively participate in business development activities, delivering net growth in customers	✓		
Grow customer numbers by implementing local customer acquisition strategies	✓		
Work with marketing to develop brand awareness and grow customers		✓	
Participate in On-Call Roster		✓	
Perform Clinical Assessments for all new customers			✓
Manage the recruitment and induction process for all new team members	✓		
Manage the use of client management systems (CMS) by direct reports		✓	
Ensure all customer medical records are kept up to date			✓



Extracts from the generic frontline leader position description

Position Objective

As a Frontline Leader your major responsibility is to directly lead the delivery of services by a team of Disability Support Workers (DSW's) and/or other associated frontline staff to deliver high quality services to NDIS customers that meet their needs and expectations. These services must also be aligned to organisational, service, and individual customer outcomes.

Key responsibilities of this role

- Provide professional leadership, guidance, support to ensure the team's work is commercially effective and sustainable, identifying opportunities for process improvement or more effective ways of working.
- Lead a team ensuring services can be provided to customers in a way that optimises customer outcomes and meet or exceed organisational, portfolio, service, funding and external compliance objectives.
- Evaluate the quality of service delivery, customer plans and customer outcomes against service, funding and compliance objectives on a regular basis. Identify gaps in delivery and work with the team to build capability and/or improve service design.
- Develop and manage budgets for each service to ensure programs are delivered cost effectively. This may include recording income and expenditure accurately to ensure the service remains within agreed financial performance parameters.
- Design and lead service reviews and evaluations with the objectives of aligning design of services to customer demand under the new NDIS market and improving efficiency.
- Undertake and/or assist with staff rostering to ensure that there are adequate skilled staff to safely provide quality support to all customers
- Undertake practice monitoring and quality assessments to ensure good outcomes are achieved for customers and services delivered are in accordance with legislative and policy requirements.
- Work with team members to help them understand and achieve performance expectations, build their capability, provide regular recognition, develop and utilise talent in the team, and identify and achieve improved customer outcomes and increase employee engagement.
- Support team members to understand the vision, values and direction of the organisation and translate them so the team understands how they relate to their everyday practice.
- Identify learning needs within the team, and appropriate learning opportunities both within and without the organisation. Develop and facilitate learning opportunities when appropriate.
- Work with staff, customers and other stakeholders to find appropriate resolution to concerns and complaints.
- Manage performance processes such as time and attendance, leave, learning, and injuries in conjunction with management as required.
- Work collaboratively with staff across the organisation and with the community and develop and maintain effective relationships and networks with relevant community partners, referral agencies, and relevant community groups, including attending networking meetings and forums where requested.
- Comply with mandatory reporting requirements that apply to the service.
- To understand the operation and requirements of the NDIS and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

How will you be assessed?

Your merit will be assessed based on the following skills, competencies, qualifications, education and experience as they relate to the role:

- Tertiary qualification in business, human services or other relevant field, or equivalent experience.
- Demonstrated ability to manage the delivery of services to customers and exceed quality service expectations.
- Financial skills including budgeting, monitoring performance, and the ability to forecast income and expenses.
- Demonstrated experience working with, and/or knowledge of regulatory and compliance frameworks
- Demonstrated understanding of (and experience working with) contemporary theoretical and practice frameworks in an area of service delivery
- Demonstrated experience in applying human resource management strategies.
- Ability to implement change and improvements to work practices.
- Excellent communication, negotiation and relationship building skills.
- Strong leadership skills and demonstrated experience in managing a small/medium team.

What this means for Providers

The generic Frontline Leader position description will assist with the development of position descriptions, and you should review the list of tasks/responsibilities not included to determine if they are relevant for your Frontline Leader roles. In the next stage of this project we will be developing a future state Frontline Leader position description with more flexibility to customise responsibilities for your specific organisational needs.

We are always seeking further information on how organisations are evolving their Frontline Leader roles so if you have comments or documents that may be useful for the project team we would encourage you to email them to peter.stewart@abilityfirst.org.au

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

please visit www.abilityfirstaustralia.org.au or email: info@abilityfirstaustralia.org.au