



Participant Views of Frontline Leader Competencies

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.

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 will be completed by June 2021.

THE FIRST STAGE of the project documented the "Current State" role for the Frontline Leader. The findings from Stage 1 have been published on the [Ability First website](#):

- Project background
- Participant views of the Frontline Leader role
- Typical Frontline Leader tasks
- Frontline Leaders views on how their future roles
- Generic position description for the current Frontline Leader

THE SECOND STAGE of the project included development of a series of documents and tools:

- Position Description for the future Frontline Leader roles
- Capability Leadership Framework
- Capability gaps analysis method
- Organisational designs
- Impact of span of control on Frontline Leader costs
- Participant views on Frontline Leader competencies

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 throughout the life of the project.

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How we collected the views of participants

The Ability Forum is a national online consumer panel which has the ability to gain real-time market insights from people with disability and carers. Putting consumers at the centre of service provider decision making, the Ability Forum aligns exceptionally well with the NDIS and its emphasis on consumer choice and control in a market context. The Ability Forum runs regular consumer sentiment and advocacy surveys, the outcomes of which allow providers to better understand the views of people with disability and their carers on a range of subjects such as current services, possible new services and products, and the implementation of the NDIS.

The Ability Forum online consumer panel comprises members, recruited from all across Australia, who are either participants or carers for NDIS participants.

The online survey was drafted with the assistance of market research firm, Edentify, who have partnered with Ability First on developing the Ability Forum platform. The survey contained a small number of questions that sought both quantitative and qualitative answers.

The questions for this survey were structured to collect and screen respondents, and then once qualified, the questions sought respondent views on the competencies required by FLL's. The questions also included an opportunity for respondents to rate the importance of critical competencies.

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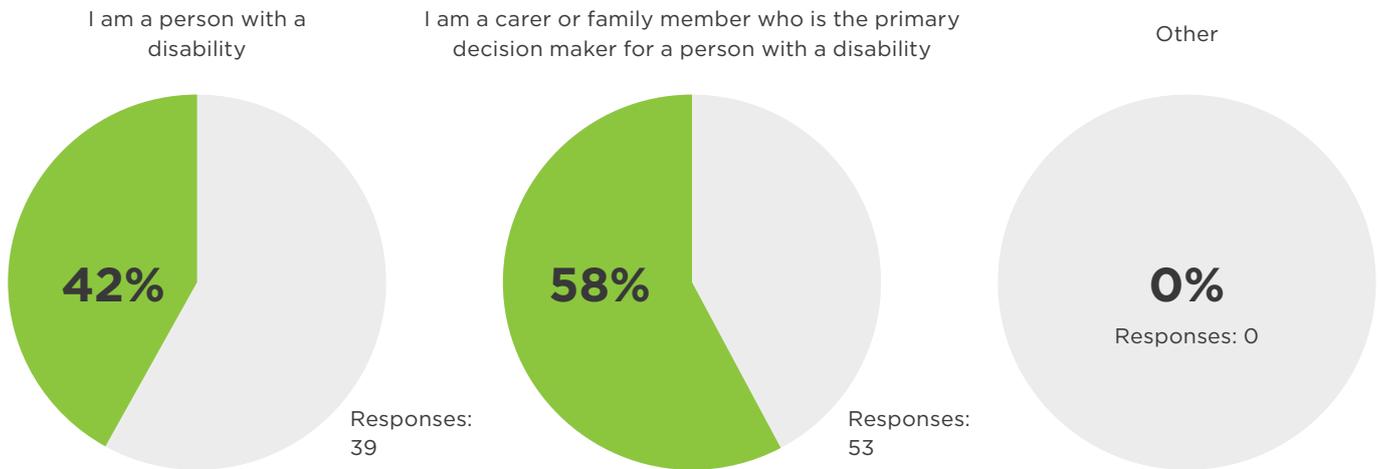


The survey was released to the Ability Forum members in August 2020 and most respondents completed the survey in 5 minutes.

The survey screened respondents so that only respondents that had interactions with FLL's completed the entire survey. Approximately 90 respondents completed the survey.

The desired outcome of the survey was to identify participant views on competencies, and these views were used to confirm the competencies listed in the FLL Capability Framework.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOU?



Respondent profile

The respondents included a similar number of people with a disability and carers/family members. Of those who are carers or family members, 94% were a family member or a close friend. Therefore, the findings are expected to reflect the views of people with a disability. The age profile of respondents was balanced with all but one age grouping approximately 10%. The 30-34yrs and 45-49yrs groups accounted for 26% of the all respondents. The respondents were located around Australia and approximately 75% came from New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

The next question sought information on the mix of services being received by the respondents. The list of services was derived from the services listed in the NDIS Price Guide.

The top five services and the percentage of respondents using these services were:

- Support coordination (50%)
- Therapy services out of schools (67%)
- In home personal care (62%)
- One on one support to join community, social or recreational activities (55%)
- Equipment or assistive technologies (63%)

Capabilities

The remaining questions sought views from respondents on the core capabilities that Frontline Leaders needed to display when interacting with participants or their carers.

A Capability incorporates the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that each person brings to their work. It includes technical, business, personal and professional expertise which can be developed by formal and informal learning, observation, mentoring, guidance, feedback, lifelong experience, and reflection. For each capability a series of behaviours and proficiencies can be identified.

The Frontline Leader Capability Leadership Framework (FLL CLF) has five core competencies and they are:

1. Thinks and Works Strategically
2. Achieves Results and Drives Accountability
3. Engages People to Build Positive Relationships
4. Exemplifies Personal Drive and Integrity
5. Communicates and Collaborates with Influence

These core competencies are then further divided into several proficiencies. A proficiency describes the behaviours that an effective person would demonstrate for each capability. It is not expected that a person will immediately display or demonstrate all the proficiencies and behaviours detailed in the framework. Not all of the proficiencies would be observed by respondents as many of these are internal facing i.e. within the provider organisation rather than being outward facing. The survey questions answered by the respondents sought to rate the importance of the outward proficiencies and behaviours and in turn confirmed that these proficiencies were needed in the FLL CLF.

There are two profiles in the capability framework that align with two position classifications (and their equivalents): Team Leader and Coordinator. These levels align with the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award (SCHADS) 2010 classifications of a Social and community services employee level 3 and 4. There are a number of titles used for Team Leaders and these include Team Leader Services, Team Leader, Short Stay Coordinator, and Service Leader.

The Team Leader positions are those that normally interact with participants and their carers, so they were the prime focus for the survey questions. The following sections report the results from the survey.



1. Thinks and Works Strategically

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CLF 1 - 1.1 PURPOSE

Is supportive of and can describe the organisation’s vision, mission, and business objectives to other staff.

Communicates and follows direction provided by supervisor. Recognises how own work contributes to the achievement of organisational goals. Can explain and communicate the reasons for decisions and recommendations.

Q1. Approximately 79% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for Frontline Leaders to be able to explain the service provider’s vision, mission to the people they support.

CLF1 - 1.5 MARKETING

Supports marketing activities when required with support from the organisation. Understands the importance of effective marketing in improving service delivery and in achieving organisational goals.

Q3. Approximately 34% of respondents felt that FLL’s should discuss the range of available services every month and 36% felt that this should be every six months.

Q11. Approximately 66% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for the Frontline Leader to promote the work that their provider undertakes.

CLF 1 - 1.6 GOVERNANCE

Complies with organisational governance requirements while achieving business goals. Applies a good working knowledge of the risks and liabilities associated with the work area. Monitors compliance with organisational controls and supports employees who report compliance issues. Acts without delay and appropriately in dealing with incident, risk management, mandatory reporting. Ensure compliance with WHS Legislation.

Q2. Approximately 82% of respondents felt that FLL’s should follow all the rules and regulations set by the provider even when this may impact the services provided to them.

CLF1 - 1.7 SYSTEMS

Streamlines systems and processes to achieve organisational objectives. Looks for and identifies inefficient or ineffective methods or procedures and takes steps to eliminate or improve them focusing on continuous quality improvement. Seeks and implements structural, system and technology changes to support service improvement.

Q4. Approximately 89% of respondents felt that Frontline Leaders should stop using or improve inefficient procedures that impacted the quality of the services being provide to them.

2. Achieves results and drives accountability

CLF1 - 2.1 DIRECTION

Clearly and comfortably delegates routine tasks and decisions to direct reports. Supports people to successfully perform delegated tasks. Allows people to finish their own work (within the agreed timeframes). Monitors process, progress, and results.

Q5. Approximately 81% of respondents felt that Frontline Leaders only needed to monitor and discuss the quality of services every month or less frequently. Only 15% of respondents felt that this was required to be discussed every week.

CLF1 - 2.2 LEADERSHIP

Provides current, direct, complete, and actionable positive and/or corrective feedback to others. Assists others to identify their development needs and plan development. Assigns challenging and stretching tasks for development purposes. Provides guidance, advice, and coaching to develop others. Recommends suitable development activities to others. Motivates staff to achieve goals.

Q6. Approximately 90% of respondents felt that it was important or very important to provide positive and helpful feedback to the staff that they work with.

Q6. Approximately 94% of respondents felt that it was important or very important to develop the skills of staff that they work with.

CLF1 – 2.3 MANAGING EMPLOYEES

Assesses the suitability of existing staff and potential recruits when required. Manages people with consideration for their strengths and work interests. Identifies skills and performance gaps and takes action to address them. Deals with unacceptable behaviour promptly and effectively. Works in line with the organisation's disciplinary policy and procedures. Demonstrates understanding of professional boundaries.

Q11. Approximately 96% of respondents felt that it was important or very important to develop strategies to improve their team's performance.

Q11. Approximately 91% of respondents felt that it was important or very important to set aside the time needed to lead and supervise frontline workers to ensure the best services are provided to them.

3. Engages people to build positive relationships

CLF1 – 3.2 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Works with customers to explore and resolve their practical complex needs, expectations, and goals in line with their NDIS plan. Understands relevant service delivery theory and has operational knowledge of supports and services available. Is flexible and suggests alternatives and gathers information to enable effective referral. Maintains communication with customers during complex problem resolution. Understands confidentiality and diversity aspects. Promotes individuals rights and allows freedom of decision making.

Q7. Approximately 85% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for Frontline Leaders to build a trusting relationship with the people they support.

Q8. Approximately 86% of respondents felt that Frontline Leaders only needed to meet with them every month or less frequently to discuss how their expectations and goals were being met.

Q11. Approximately 92% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for Frontline Leaders to seek best value in any goods and services they provide.

CLF1 – 3.3 PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Develops models and protocols for working in formal and informal partnerships with other community service organisations to achieve customer outcomes. Involves people, encourages them and recognises their contribution. Consults and shares information and ensures others are kept informed of issues. Works collaboratively and operates as an effective leader and team member.

Q10. Approximately 83% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for Frontline Leaders to connect the people they support with other groups and organisations.

CLF1 – 3.4 FAIRNESS

Models courtesy, respect and fairness in dealing with people. Supports equal and fair treatment and opportunity for all. Works effectively with people of all races, nationalities, cultures, disabilities, ages and genders. Recognises the positive benefits that can be gained from diversity and encourages the exploration of diverse views. Follows all organisational policies regarding providing a safe, respectful environment for all, which is free from discrimination, bullying or harassment.

Q9. Approximately 97% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for Frontline Leaders to be able to work with people of all races, nationalities, cultures, disabilities, ages and genders.

Q9. Approximately 98% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for Frontline Leaders to show respect and fairness to others.

4. Exemplifies personal drive and integrity

CLF1 – 4.1 AUTHENTICITY

Actions are consistent with words. Acts in accordance with own and organisational values. Leads others with heart and mind.

Q12. Approximately 99% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for Frontline Leaders to do what they say they will do.

CLF1 – 4.2 PRIORITISING AND DECISION MAKING

Attends first to what's most important. Acts decisively in uncertain circumstances. Takes responsibility for decisions and their implications.

Q12. Approximately 97% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for Frontline Leaders to listen and act quickly on feedback.

CLF1 – 4.4 SINCERITY AND COURAGE

Admits mistakes and accepts accountability for own behaviour and decisions. Is direct, yet considerate, in communications with others. Takes difficult and/or unpopular action when necessary. Is open to discussion of personal strengths, weaknesses, beliefs, and feelings. Expresses opinions with candor and says what needs to be said. Initiates challenging conversations without delay.

Q12. Approximately 97% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for Frontline Leaders to identify, admit and then fix any mistakes that have occurred.

5. Communicates and collaborates with influence

CLF1 – 5.1 COMMUNICATES CLEARLY

Confidently presents messages in a clear, concise, articulate and accurate manner. Focuses on key points and uses appropriate, unambiguous language. Selects the most appropriate medium for conveying information and structures written and oral communication to ensure clarity. Articulates clear, persuasive and relevant messages about key issues when advocating or negotiating for customers and on behalf of the organisation.

Q13. Approximately 94% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for Frontline Leaders to understand the best way to communicate with them.

CLF1 – 5.2 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Models self-awareness, self-management and social awareness in communications, problem solving and conflict resolution. Shapes responses to individuals based on perception of verbal and non-verbal cues. Listens attentively and has the patience to hear people out. Is approachable and easy to talk to. Demonstrates understanding of the impact of both spoken and written words.

Q13. Approximately 90% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for Frontline Leaders to check that the person they are communicating with has understood their communication.

CLF1 – 5.3 ADVOCACY

Articulates clear and persuasive messages about key issues when advocating or negotiating for customers and on behalf of the organisation. Ensures care practices honour and uphold the preferences, needs and values of customers. Ensures customers are central to decision-making regarding their care.

Q13. Approximately 91% of respondents felt that it was important or very important for Frontline Leaders to work with the person they support to find solutions to meet their needs, expectations and goals.

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