



## Entry Roles Supporting the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

### Critical Roles in Industry

Support workers empower individuals to be an active member of their local community and enable them to manage their day to day lives. These roles are a good foundation for many other employment opportunities within the human services sector.

### Description of Support Roles

Entry level roles supporting the Deaf and Hard of Hearing people living in Western Australia include assistance with independent living skills and community inclusion. The types of activities being carried out by a support worker depend on specific client goals as set out under the government funded [National Disability Insurance Scheme](#) (NDIS). Each program is customised to help people get the support and guidance they need to improve their skills and independence.

Typically, support workers are assigned tasks which help clients develop their independent living skills and the ability to perform everyday functions or chores. These can include food shopping, cooking, gardening, house cleaning, washing clothes, internet set-up, and running of errands such as collecting items from the Post Office. It could be hearing a child read if both parents are deaf. The range of needs are broad and varied.

Support workers also play an important role in supporting social and community inclusion. This

might mean attending deaf or hearing events, taking clients to attend fitness sessions, supporting them to mix and interact with people, or helping them understand what is happening across a range of settings. Clients range up to 65 years of age.

### Allocation of Work

Work is assigned to support workers based on client goals in their NDIS plan. Activity requests or tasks are matched to the identified areas of interest and specific capabilities of available support workers. A phone app is used to notify the relevant person of a job which can then be accepted or declined.

### Employment Conditions

Support workers are employed under the [Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010](#). Majority of support workers enter the industry as casual employees and are paid as a social and community services employee (Level 1.1). Opportunities to work span across all days of the week and are not restricted to business hours. Different casual hourly rates apply, depending on the day but vary between \$26.96 to \$59.32 (as at 1 July 2020, refer to [Pay Guide in WA](#)). Additional allowances apply, including first aid allowance and a vehicle allowance of \$0.80 per km when travelling between jobs or when you take a client out in your own car.

## Training Required

Access Plus deliver short [Australian Sign Language \(Auslan\) courses](#) at basic (\$249), intermediate (\$299) and advanced (\$299) levels designed specifically for community. These can be done online or face-to-face across various Perth locations. Evening or Saturday classes run between 2 and 8 weeks, depending on choice of delivery. Check their website for next year's locations and costs.

## Other Requirements

Support workers must be at least 18 years old. The role requires a minimum of a provisional driver's licence (red P plates) and access to a roadworthy car to get to and from the different work sites. Depending on the assignment, casual support workers may also be required to use their own car to drive the client to different locations. Similarly, a phone is needed to receive job notifications, to record summary notes after each job and to log time sheets.

Prior to any work being conducted, all staff need to undergo a [Working with Children Check](#) at commencement of employment. They need a [Police clearance](#) (no more than six months old). NDIS requirements also specify the need for a current First Aid Certificate.

## Well Suited Traits

People who are well suited to support worker roles are those interested in working in an environment which helps others. These roles require you to follow goals and guide clients to achieve those goals. Often you need to think on your feet and use initiative to mentor clients. You may need to manage client expectations and be flexible in your approach on how these goals are met. You need to be able to work well with people. Empathy and interpersonal skills are critical. You also need to be well organised to manage your work diary and understand travel time between appointments.

## Career Progression

While not a requirement, the completion of an entry level vocational education and training qualification in a related field can complement the work being undertaken by support workers and increase their earning potential. Of particular relevance are [Certificate III in Individual Support](#) and [Certificate IV in Disability](#) which reflect roles of workers in community and residential settings who provide different levels of support to a range of people.

Formal, nationally accredited qualifications can also be gained in Auslan at Certificates II, III and IV levels, currently delivered through North Metropolitan TAFE. Further study can also enable pathways into Auslan interpreting work within the sector.

Casual support roles can evolve into part time and full time roles. Access Plus invest time and training to develop staff identified for progression into other roles within the organisation. Over time, experience within the industry can help people transition into roles across areas such as administration, team leadership, training and mentoring. Skills gained are transferrable to other industries such as counselling, youth work, aged care, early childhood education and care, and social work.

## Find Out More

Contact Access Plus to find out more about becoming a casual support worker and the current employment opportunities in the sector: [enquiry@accessplus.org.au](mailto:enquiry@accessplus.org.au) or 08 9441 2677.

Vital Interpreting Personnel is another organisation in Western Australia providing interpreting and support services for the Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing community. Their requirements and employment scope may vary to that of Access Plus. Contact Vital for more information.



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