

# Meet a Co-worker: Helda Ashaq

Helda Ashaq was born in Iraq and lived in Jordan for 14 years. In 2008, while Helda was just a teenager, her family gained a visa to settle in Australia.

Since moving to Australia, Helda has worked several different jobs, including with SSI's Future Ability program. After Future Ability's contract ended, Helda found work with the Local Area Coordination (LAC) program as an Intake Officer.



## What do you do as a LAC Intake Officer?

My role involves being the first person to represent SSI and NDIS and talk to participants when they call us. I can find out what they are looking for and then refer them onto other staff members from the LAC or other programs.

## How has joining the LAC during these strange times been?

Overall, it has not been too hard to transfer into my new position.

Although, as the role is new to me, it has been a challenge to work from home, as I find the best way to learn new skills is from the people with more experience around you. It is hard when you are answering calls on your own, because there is no one sitting next to you that you can ask questions, instead, you need to put the caller on hold and try and get in contact with individuals remotely.

It hasn't always been easy, but I think we have been handling the situation very well.

## What were you doing before you joined LAC as an Intake officer?

Before working with SSI, I worked for an organisation that would assist people from a Middle Eastern background who are living in Australia to transfer money home to their families.

Once I had my children, I took a break from work and started my own party food and decoration business from home called



Heavenssweetcups. I am quite a creative person and I think this work is one of my talents. You can find my business on [Facebook here](#), or [Instagram here](#).

About a year ago, I found employment with SSI's Future Ability program as a Hub Specialist, working two days a week. Although I only worked with Future Ability for a year, I made many friends and am still in contact with the people I worked with.

## Have you always wanted to work in disability?

Working in disability wasn't a specific goal for me, it is more something that I just fell into. But I have always liked to help others, and this is something that all my jobs, including this one as an Intake Officer, involves.

## What are you looking forward to most about getting back into the office?

I am looking forward to the team environment, where we can all share our experiences and sit down together and chat on our breaks. It was nice when the team met up for training a month ago, I made sure to bring in some of my sweet treats.