

# The role of an Audiologist transcript

Hi, I’m Matt Grounds. I’m a Senior Audiologist and I’ve been working with people who are Deaf and hard of hearing, including people with deafblindness for over 40 years.

Audiologists assess the hearing and ear health of people who are Deaf or hard of hearing, including people with deafblindness, and then work with them to make a plan for the supports they need, and provide assistive technology and other supports as required.

To do this people with deafblindness come to a clinic where the audiologist takes a history to learn more about each person’s story regarding hearing, vision and communication, and to get an idea of that persons own goals for living better with hearing loss.

We:

* Look in their ears for signs of any blockage like wax, and to observe the eardrum to see if it looks healthy.
* We can do a test called tympanometry that measures the movement of the eardrum
* Test their hearing by playing sounds at different frequencies or pitch, and different volumes. The results are mapped on an audiogram which is unique to that person.
* We also test the person’s ability to understand words when they are amplified to match their hearing loss. This is to get an idea of how useful hearing aids might be for improving clarity of speech.

Once hearing is assessed I can recommend different equipment and strategies to optimise use of the hearing the person has.

Equipment I recommend might include:

* Hearing Aids (which come in a range of styles) or Cochlear implants, which these days usually have Bluetooth connectivity to phones, TVs, and computers.
* Additional remote microphones that can give extra help hearing over distance and in noisy situations.
* Visual and tactile alerting devices for safety and awareness, which includes smoke alarms, doorbells, alarm clocks and pagers, that can alert you with sound, vibration, and lights.

We help people learn to use their Assistive Technology to get the best out of it, and we can make additional modifications to make it easier for the deafblind person to manage.

We can also work on strategies for living better with hearing loss, such as advocating for yourself, working with communication partners, and managing in more complex environments such as noisy restaurants and workplaces.

Children, and people with deafblindness and additional cognitive disabilities can be tested using adapted techniques, such as using lights and puppets, and other forms of testing such as Auditory Brainstem Response or Otoacoustic Emissions which measure hearing without the person needing to respond. We can use observation of listening behaviours, such as stilling or a consistent change in body movement.

Audiologists can also assist in assessment and management of Central Auditory Processing Disorder and Auditory Neuropathy.

Audiology Services including Assistive Technology can be funded under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

End of transcript.