



ENVIRONMENTAL / SENSORY



# GCworkplace Consultation Series on Accessibility

**PRELIMINARY REPORT – ENVIRONMENTAL / SENSORY DISABILITIES**

**LAST UPDATED ON: SPRING 2021**

**DEPARTMENT: ACCOMMODATION MANAGEMENT AND WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS, REAL PROPERTY SERVICES, PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT CANADA**



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# Introduction

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The GCworkplace Consultation Series on Accessibility was created as part of the mandate of the Centre for GCworkplace Innovation, which is to foster knowledge transfer and innovation as well as develop new concepts and tools for the Government of Canada (GC) workplace in collaboration with GC departments, agencies, and external partners. It was also created following the GC's priority and commitment towards accessibility by partnering with key stakeholders.

The GCworkplace Consultation Series on Accessibility consisted of a series of virtual workshops with persons with various types of disabilities (visible and invisible) to discuss and understand their needs in the workplace. A total of 14 sessions (seven in English and seven in French) were originally organized; due to high demand, additional sessions were added for certain disabilities. Through engagement and consultation with users of workplaces, each session addressed existing and emerging or potential workplace barriers for a specific type of disability including mobility issues, cognitive impairments, learning disabilities, environmental sensitivity, visual impairments, hearing impairments, and psychological and mental health.

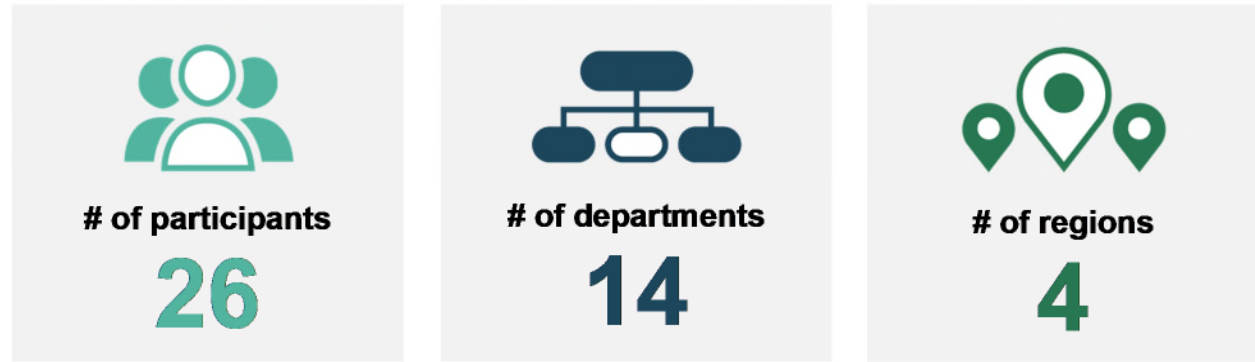
Two sessions attended by persons with environmental / sensory disabilities—affecting sensitivity to light, sounds, or other distractions, as well as allergens and other environmental sensitivities—were held on December 9 (in French) and December 16 (in English). Following the success of these sessions, another session was held in English on February 4, 2021.



# Statistics

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For environmental / sensory disabilities sessions held on December 9 and December 16, 2020, and February 4, 2021.



## PARTICIPATING DEPARTMENTS

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Canada Revenue Agency
- Canadian Heritage
- Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
- Department of Justice Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Global Affairs Canada
- Health Canada
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- Public Service and Procurement Canada
- Service Canada
- Shared Services Canada
- Veterans Affairs Canada

The president of the Environmental Health Association of Québec also participated in the sessions at the request of many participants.



## **PARTICIPATING REGIONS AND CITIES**

- **National Capital Area**
- **Atlantic** (Charlottetown, Halifax, Saint John & Bathurst)
- **Western** (Winnipeg & Edmonton)
- **Quebec** (St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Montreal & Sherbrooke)



# Comments

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Participants were asked to share their thoughts on their current workplace—what works, what doesn't—as well as to imagine their dream workplace. They were also walked through what a GCworkplace might look like and asked about potential barriers in specific parts of a workplace.

## CURRENT WORKPLACES



When asked about their current workplaces, participants struggled to identify positive elements. A few people mentioned that they liked having collaborative space to work with colleagues, and those participants who had access to quiet offices or focus rooms appreciated them. One participant mentioned that they were very grateful to have a supportive manager who worked with them to find solutions to rooms or set-ups that weren't accessible for them. Although participants had been asked about their workplaces before the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple participants mentioned that they were enjoying working from home since the pandemic began because it allowed them to control their own lighting, scents, and physical work environment.

In general, however, participants felt that their current workplaces were very inaccessible. Several common concerns arose.



### **A lack of understanding of invisible disabilities**

The most common issue raised by participants was a lack of understanding among their coworkers and managers about their disability because it was an invisible disability. They felt that coworkers and managers didn't respect their needs, and some participants spoke of coworkers mocking or resenting their accommodations. Multiple participants felt that there was a lot of disbelief and discrimination toward people with invisible disabilities, and they felt that it was stressful to constantly have to educate others about their disability.

### **No ability to control lighting**

Lighting was also mentioned by most participants as being a concern. Artificial or fluorescent lighting affected most participants negatively, causing headaches, blurred vision, and fatigue, and the noise they made was problematic for many. Several participants mentioned that they had to wear hats and sunglasses in the office to cope with the lighting and that other employees judged them as unprofessional because of this. Others noted that they had tried to have the lights over their workpoints turned off but had this request denied.

### **A lack of support from management**

Multiple participants commented that their managers denied or downplayed their requests for accommodations. One participant commented that they had to get a new doctor's note for any request. Another participant had their manager deny their medical request to telework. Several participants were given offices that isolated them from their coworkers, and they commented that it seemed that management felt it was easier to isolate the person with the disability than it was to change the environment that was causing the issues.

### **No enforcement of scent-free policy**

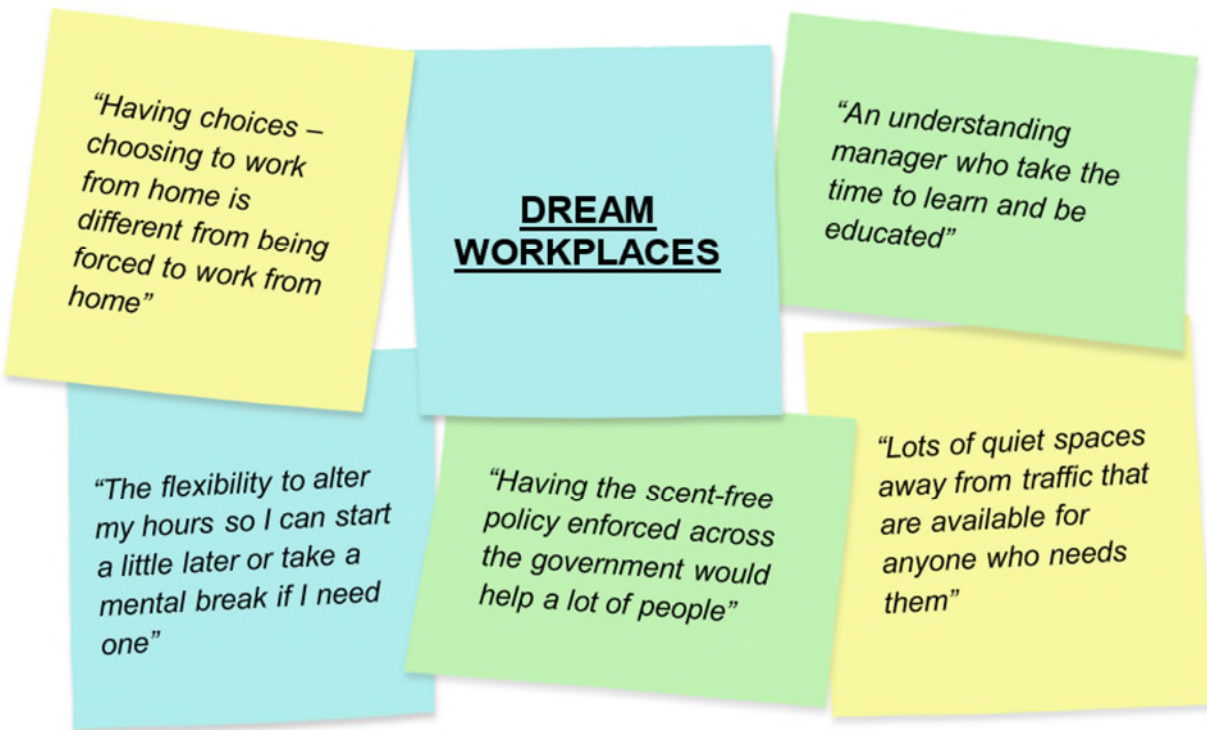
Many participants noted that, although their offices may have had a scent-free policy, there was no enforcement of it, and other employees continued to use scented products and chemicals despite signs asking them not to. Participants pointed out that, even if there were no scents in their immediate vicinity, they could still have asthma attacks, headaches, or other effects from the scents left behind by people who had walked past or who had used a meeting room earlier in the day. They also commented that even if employees abided by the scent-free policy, there was no enforcement for external visitors.

### **A lack of privacy and quiet spaces**

Many participants commented that open areas, such as open offices in Workplace 2.0 designs, were difficult for them as these areas were too busy and distracting. They also found that there weren't enough or even any quiet places for them to go if they needed a break from the noise or lights of the main office. Several participants mentioned that they were forced to use the bathroom as a quiet space, while others said that they went to their cars. Some participants did have quiet rooms in their office but didn't feel comfortable using them as they had windows, meaning that other people could see what was going on inside.



## DREAM WORKPLACES



When asked about their vision for their dream workplaces, participants listed practical improvements that would make workplaces work for them.

### **Flexible hours and work locations**

Participants wanted the flexibility to work from home without having to justify that decision, as well as the ability to make use of coworking spaces near to their homes. They stressed that they wanted to have the choice of work locations and workpoints, and not to be forced to work in a certain location because there were no other options. Participants also wanted flexible work hours that could be adjusted as needed to accommodate headaches, fatigue, or other issues related to their disabilities.

### **Scent-free workplaces**

Participants stressed that workplaces needed to be kept scent free both for employees and for external visitors, and that this needed to go beyond signage to having active intervention if someone with a scent tried to enter the building. They wanted all cleaning products and soaps to be scent free as well, and noted that there needed to be sufficient ventilation to ensure that any scents that were brought into the workplace—for example, on people’s clothing—did not linger or spread. They also noted that there should be education so that all employees





understood why a scent-free policy was necessary and understood what products could affect others.

### **Adjustable lighting**

Participants wanted lights that were both dimmable and with the option to turn them entirely off, both at individual workpoints and also in meeting rooms. They suggested that alternatives to fluorescent and LED lights needed to be found to reduce the impact of lighting in places where it could not be dimmed or turned off. They also wanted natural light used whenever possible, with the caveat that there needed to be a way to block all light as sometimes even natural light could be too bright.

### **Access to quiet spaces**

Participants emphasized the importance of having access to quiet spaces, such as reservable closed offices or closed areas, with minimal noise and distractions, where they could take breaks or do focus work without being interrupted. They noted that these rooms should have solid walls or another way to keep people outside from seeing in and that it should be possible to fully darken the rooms.

## **POTENTIAL BARRIERS**



Participants were asked for feedback about barriers in different parts of the workplace, as well as what they would like to see instead in those places. Some common barriers were identified:



## Meeting rooms

Meeting rooms came up frequently as barriers at the office. Several participants commented that the use of carpet in meeting rooms as a way to reduce noise was problematic, as newer carpets were off-gassing and older carpets could contain bacteria and mold. They also noted that carpet patterns could be visually distracting or disorienting. Meeting rooms with glass walls were found to be very distracting as anyone walking past was visible and people outside the room could see what was happening in the room. Most participants struggled with the lighting in meeting rooms, finding it to be too bright, and many found that meeting rooms had overhead fans that were painfully noisy. Participants also commented that there weren't enough small meeting rooms for people to use as focus rooms or for small meetings.

Participants recommended using cork instead of carpet as flooring to reduce sound and other negative effects from carpeting. They noted that having solid colours on the floors and walls and having frosted glass could reduce visual distractions. Participants suggested having dimmable lights in meeting rooms to make it possible to adjust lighting to a comfortable level, as well as frosting any glass walls or windows to preserve the privacy of anyone in the room. They commented that meeting rooms should have good ventilation in order to quickly remove any scents that may be in the room. Participants stressed that there should be plenty of small meeting rooms so that anyone who needed one could have access to one. They also noted that meeting rooms should have good quality audio and video connections so that people who were teleworking could participate equally in meetings.

## Kitchens

Kitchens were another area where participants frequently struggled. Most participants found that they were among the hardest places for them in the office as they had to deal with a combination of bright lights, strong scents, and loud noises, as well as the risk of allergens. Several commented that the open nature of many kitchens meant that noises were amplified, making it difficult to have conversations and process information. Some participants were concerned about off-gassing from the materials used in the kitchens. Participants who struggled with sensory processing found it overwhelming to be around crowds of people, particularly in high-traffic areas like near refrigerators and microwaves. As a result, many participants didn't use their workplace's kitchen at all, or only used it at off-peak times.

Participants suggested having more than one kitchen on each floor, with at least one that was smaller so that it would be less crowded. They wanted kitchens to have natural light whenever possible and suggested using daylight sensors so that lights only came on when there wasn't sufficient natural light. Participants noted that chairs need to be comfortable so that they could spend more than a few minutes in the kitchen, and that chairs shouldn't have metal legs that would scrape on the floor when moved. They wanted kitchens to have good ventilation so that scents didn't linger or spread to the rest of the office.



## Common areas

Participants pointed out multiple barriers in common areas such as locker areas and bathrooms. Most participants had concerns about shared locker areas because of the scents and allergens that could be brought into the building on other employees' coats and belongings. They also found that locker areas could be crowded and noisy, and had concerns about non-dimmable lighting in these areas. In bathrooms, most participants found that the noise from hand dryers and flushing toilets could be overwhelming, as were the bright lights. Several participants struggled in bathrooms that used scented soaps or cleaning products. Some participants commented that the bathrooms at their workplaces were open to the public, meaning that it was very difficult to control scents in those locations.

Participants suggested having assigned lockers, which would keep employees from having to worry about scents from previous users and would also reduce anxiety around finding a locker every day. They noted that lockers should have good ventilation so that fresh air can enter the locker and disperse lingering scents. Participants preferred lockers to coat rooms both because it gave them somewhere to keep personal items and also because it reduced the chances of scents and allergens transferring from one employee's belongings to another. They commented that lockers should have doors that close gently, with no banging, and noted that if keys or fobs were used they shouldn't make noise. For bathrooms, participants suggested having more single-stall bathrooms, which would allow them to control the lighting and the noise and would also provide more accessible options for all employees. They stressed that any soaps and cleaning products should be scent-free, and that paper towels should be an option for hand drying.



# Summary of Feedback

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Symbol	Meaning
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The green checkmark icon means: this has been addressed by GCworkplace.

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The yellow line icon means: this has partially been addressed by GCworkplace.

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The red x icon means: this has not been addressed by GCworkplace.



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The blue asterisk icon means: this is outside the scope of GCworkplace.

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Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>No choice of workpoints</b>		PSPC – GCworkplace Team	<p>Workpoints are distributed to OPTIMIZE the workplace and reflect the functions of the organizations. Workpoints are not assigned or designed for individuals but rather for the optimum functionality of the workplace. The users have the freedom to choose their preferred work setting</p> <p>For more information: GCworkplace Design Guide - Part 3 Design Development, Section 3.2</p>	December 2020	
<b>Loss of privacy</b>		PSPC – GCworkplace Team	<p>Focus Work and Refuge: GCworkplace design focuses on improving access to visual and acoustic privacy. By recognizing that all employees can benefit from an environment that supports focus work or time to recharge, GCworkplace is designed to support all occupants.</p> <p>For more information: GCworkplace Design Guide, Part 2 Key Design Principles, Section 2.4.2</p>	December 2020	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>Too much noise</b>		PSPC – GCworkplace Team	<p>Taking into consideration lessons learned from Workplace 2.0, GCworkplace is divided into 3 distinctive zones: a quiet zone, a transitional zone and a collaborative zone. The quiet and collaborative zones are usually at opposite sides of a floor and are composed of various enclosed or open workpoints. And the transitional zone is the one that allows the other two to co-exist.</p> <p>For more information: GCworkplace Design Guide - Design Guide Part 2 Key Design Principles</p>	December 2020	
<b>Other people don't respect the quiet zones</b>		<p>PSPC GCworkplace Team</p> <p>GCworkplace Project Teams, including Change Management</p>	<p>GCworkplace quiet zones are usually well indicated. They include open spaces but also offer some enclosed spaces. Many quiet zones have a cozier feel with carpets, wood and lower lighting that help indicate the space is a quiet one.</p> <p>Before moving into a GCworkplace, many activities are usually organized to help the employees understand the best practices in the new</p>	January 2021	





Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			workplace. The creation of an etiquette guide by the employees as well as the use of visual reminders can also ensure everyone is aware of the expected behaviours.		
<b>Workpoints are set up so that employees can't see people approaching their desks</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	<p>GCworkplace offers a variety of options for everyone and an employee should be able to find many options that accommodate their preference, in this case, seeing people that are approaching their workpoint.</p> <p>However, following the feedback received, we suggest that a best practice would be to include some more enclosed options where the people are facing the door to help with this issue, for example, a focus room where the desk is facing the door.</p> <p>Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual.</p>	January 2021	Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)




Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			For more information: GCworkplace Technical Reference Manual		
<b>Lights are not adjustable at workpoints or in meeting rooms</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC  AND  PSPC GCworkplace Team	GCworkplace offers task lighting for various workpoints. It also suggest adding dimmable accent lighting for user adjustability.  Accessibility tips are mentioned in the Technical Reference Manual.	January 2021	
<b>Lack of natural light</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC  AND  PSPC GCworkplace Team	GCworkplace offers environments with more natural light, and views to the outside to promote mental and physical health and increase productivity. It Optimizes day light infiltration to reduce the need for artificial lighting.	January 2021	







Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>Fluorescent lights cause headaches or overstimulation</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	Fluorescent lights have been around and operating in most private sector and government office buildings over the past number of years. In cases where there are issues of complaints of headaches or overstimulation, it is recommended that those areas be investigated with respect to the age of the systems, including their design, operation and functioning of the lamps and ballasts so that further actions of improvement can be taken to remedy the situation.	March 2021	
<b>Walls are distracting because they are either too bright or too bland</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC  AND  PSPC GCworkplace Team	Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual	January 2021	Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)






Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<p><b>Carpet patterns cause dizziness because they are too busy</b></p>		<p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC  AND  PSPC GCworkplace Team</p>	<p>The exposure to repetitive patterns combined with repetitive colors with strong contrasts, are what could trigger seizures or dizziness.</p> <p>For those that have visual or cognitive impairments, strong colour contrasts are good and useful when used properly, especially for signage and wayfinding. That said overly patterned spaces can be overwhelming and confusing. In a way, it becomes a sort of visual pollution, or visual miscommunication for them.</p> <p>A future document/annex will be created to list a series of different accessible measures to be considered.</p> <p>Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual</p> <p>This will include carpets but also wall coverings.</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	<p>Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)</p>







Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>Carpet off-gases or has mold/bacteria</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC  AND  PSPC GCworkplace Team	The GoC requires low VOCs for floor material / adhesives.  Cork flooring is an excellent green flooring choice. Some cork flooring require the use of floor adhesive, which could contain a level of VOCs that could be comparable to other floor finish adhesives. It is not a resistant as other flooring options and depending on the color, is prone to fading in direct sunlight.	April 2021	
<b>Cubicles with fabric walls can have mold/bacteria</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	While textiles may present some challenges when it comes to holding scent, bacteria or moisture, they have significant sounds absorption properties and visually they help make spaces more approachable and warm. The industry does not offer many solutions right now other than fabrics when it comes to cubicle panels. That said, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, anti-microbial and easy to clean option are surely being developed for office furniture and panels.	April 2021	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>Not enough quiet or focus rooms</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	GCworkplace is not a one size fits all model, which means that workpoints ratios and distributions can be adjusted to meet the organisation needs and can be customized within a standard range.  A user-centered design approach ensures that a proper process is followed for requirements gathering which relies on user surveying. This process then leads to the ideal design solution for the organization.	March 2021	
<b>Quiet rooms are only available with a reservation that can be difficult to make</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	It is up to the organization to decide if a reservation system should be put in place, but we strongly recommend that a majority of reflection points and phone booths wouldn't need a reservation to use it, since their use is usually spontaneous.	March 2021	
<b>Quiet rooms should have available floor space for stretching or resting</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	Reflection points, whether they are fully or semi-enclosed have very little furniture and would have some space to stretch and have access to a comfortable chair.	April 2021	





Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>Air circulation is not sufficient, leading to stale air or lingering scents</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	GCworkplace office design layout tends to eliminate the stale air issue that is normally encountered by traditional partitioned offices. The more open office space layouts of GCworkplace design would thus improving air movements and air circulations, and prevents stale air accumulations due to the air stagnation condition.	April 2021	
<b>People smoke cigarettes too close to the entrance</b>		Property and Facility Management Service Line		April 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments.
<b>Lockers don't have sufficient ventilation</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	Research would have to be made to see what is available.	April 2021	Research to be done.
<b>Lockers hold scents from previous users</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	In many GCworkplace spaces, lockers are assigned to employees.	April 2021	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
No adjustable lighting in locker area		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	In shared spaces however, lockers are not assigned as they welcome many employees.  Adjustable lighting in locker areas could cause other issues such as difficulty locating lighting controls for people with low or no vision, anxieties...	April 2021	
		AND PSPC GCworkplace Team	Recommend reviewing needs on a project by project basis through engagement and feedback from the users. Could possibly incorporate zones of lighting in the locker area (bright zone, dimmed zone...)		
Locker doors slam when they close		GC employees	In a GCworkplace, lockers are usually located in the collaborative zone, away from the quiet zone where employees often concentrate on work.  This is also something that needs to be addressed as part of a culture change, not through GCworkplace.	April 2021	





Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			<p>As a first step, awareness needs to be made around this issue, through communications and possibly some signage.</p>		
<b>Locker area is too crowded and noisy</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	<p>Peak hours in locker areas are typically in the morning between 8-9AM and around 4PM in the afternoon. Using the area before or after those time can ensure a more quiet experience in the locker areas.</p> <p>Due to accessibility requirements for circulation, locker areas are quite generous in terms of space. Making them larger would affect negatively the rest of the workplace by reducing space available for workpoints.</p> <p>Noise levels are difficult to manage but are controlled as much as possible by being as far away as possible from the quiet zones.</p>	April 2021	
<b>Having to find a new locker every day can cause anxiety</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	In a team GCworkplace, lockers are usually assigned to employees. This is however not the case is shared	April 2021	Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)






Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>Lockers with key pads were not good for people with</b>			<p>spaces, like a coworking site for example.</p> <p>In a large locker room a conceptual element should be added to differentiate them. i.e.: color code, numbers on lockers. Quantities, configurations and size of lockers as well as the shared storage strategy must be determined in conjunction with client consultation. Therefore, it is the client responsibility to determine if lockers are assigned or not.</p> <p>If the strategy chosen is unassigned, someone could easily still ask to have an assigned locker to meet a duty to accommodate.</p> <p>Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual.</p>		Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference







Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>dyslexia or people with memory challenges</b>			<p>mobility, capacity, needs and personal preferences.</p> <p>Provide a variety of locker exterior and interior features such as handle, lock and hook.</p> <p>Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual.</p>		Manual (to be launched in April 2021)
<b>Length of time to get accommodations</b>		<p>PSPC – GCworkplace Team</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Departments HR Branches</p>	GCworkplace removes part of this issue as many requirements are already in the space (for example: height adjustable desks, ergonomic chairs, etc.). By integrating accessibility at the beginning of the design phase, GCworkplace is then promoting an inclusive, equitable and adaptive workplace.	December 2020	Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can facilitate and accelerate accommodation requests.
<b>Accommodation for non-visible disabilities are harder to get or are not thought of</b>		Departments HR Branches		December 2020	Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can change the way non-visible disabilities are dealt with.






Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>automatically like visible disabilities</b>					
<b>Need to always justify accommodation requests</b>		Departments HR Branches	Doctor's notes or ergonomic assessments are often questioned by managers.	December 2020	Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can change the way accommodation requests are processed.
<b>No flexibility to work from home without having to justify</b>		Departments HR Branches	Flexibility is one of the seven dimensions of GCworkplace. Flexibility allows employees to work where they will be the most productive for the tasks they have to accomplished, taking in consideration their schedule, preferences and needs. However, each department have their own rules on telework and remote working.  During the pandemic, Government of Canada employees have shown that it is possible to be as productive from home as it is from the office.	December 2020	
<b>No ability to set own hours or have flexibility with hours</b>		Departments HR Branches	Flexibility is one of the seven dimensions of GCworkplace. Flexibility allows employees to work	April 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments.







Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			<p>where they will be the most productive for the tasks they have to accomplished, taking in consideration their schedule, preferences and needs. However, each department have their own rules on telework and remote working. // During the pandemic, Government of Canada employees have shown that it is possible to be as productive from home as it is from the office.</p>		
<p><b>Scent-free policies are not in place, are not respected by employees or visitors, or are not enforced by workplace</b></p>		<p>Departments HR Branches</p>		<p>April 2021</p>	<p>Transfer consultation results to departments.</p>
<p><b>Managers are not aware of their obligations to accommodate or of tools to help</b></p>		<p>Departments HR Branches</p>	<p>The Government of Canada (GC) Workplace Accessibility Passport might help solve this issue, at least partially. The Passport is a tool (yet to be launched) to create a more inclusive and accessible workplace by facilitating conversations between employees and their managers about</p>	<p>April 2021</p>	<p>Transfer consultation results to departments.</p>



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			the tools and supports employees need to succeed in their jobs. The Passport will support employee mobility and career development by ensuring the portability of adaptive tools and support measures between federal organizations.		
<b>Managers don't want to hire or attempt to get rid of people with disabilities</b>		Departments HR Branches	This is not something fixed by GCworkplace but the Government of Canada is working on recruiting more people with disabilities by 2025.	April 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments.
<b>Managers and other employees lack understanding of sensory / environment disabilities</b>		Departments HR Branches		March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments.
<b>People with accommodation needs are isolated away from the rest of their team (either in an office or forced to work at home)</b>		PSPC – GCworkplace Team  AND  Departments HR Branches	In a GCworkplace, all employees in a team can choose the best workpoint according to their preferences and needs.	April 2021	




Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>Ergonomic equipment isn't available at home (only at office, not both places)</b>		Departments HR Branches		March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments to see what can be done.
<b>Bathroom sizes – some are too big, some too small, different size for different needs</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	OABE to provide information It is very hard to implement in most existing facilities without reducing the number of washrooms. This could compromise the number of washrooms per floor in existing buildings.	December 2020	Should be considered in new buildings, and where possible in major fit-up and base building improvements.
<b>No automatic dispensers for water, soap, paper towel</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	OABE to provide information – work in progress due to COVID Application may vary depending on building owner and existing agreements.	December 2020	Where possible, automatic dispensers at reaching distance in a seated position is ideal.
<b>Bathroom stalls with open tops and bottoms cause anxiety</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	Gendered multi-stall washrooms with open tops and bottoms are typically designed to facilitate a faster air flushing and evacuation of foul air which reduces exposure by individuals using the facility.	January 2021	







Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>Toilet flushes are too loud</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	However, the application and use of single use all-access washroom will improve the situation regarding anxiety.  CSA: Accessible environments should be designed for sound control, both to provide auditory cues where needed, and to minimize distracting or disorienting sounds such as echoes.	April 2021	
<b>Hand dryers are too loud</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	This noise issue would require a study of the specific location and installation condition of the hand dryers, toilets and the type of bathroom construction and condition.  CSA: Accessible environments should be designed for sound control, both to provide auditory cues where needed, and to minimize distracting or disorienting sounds such as echoes.  This noise issue would require a study of the specific location and installation condition of the hand	April 2021	






Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<p><b>No paper towel available as alternative to hand dryer</b></p>		<p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC</p>	<p>dryers, toilets and the type of bathroom construction and condition.</p> <p>Application may vary depending on building owner and existing agreements but it is a priority to improving the built environment for people with all disabilities. The first step to achieving this goal is through a consultation process to determine specific user needs.</p> <p>According to CSA B651-18, a towel dispenser and / or hand dryer are required. If a person needs one of these two types of devices but is not available, this should be referred to the facility manager for corrective action as part of the duty to accommodate process.</p> <p>Apart from codes and standards, Future accessibility requirements should take into consideration the most suitable application for the specific building facility and user needs. Various options are recommended for a more inclusive environment</p>	<p>April 2021</p>	




Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>Soaps are scented</b>		Property and Facility Management Service Line		April 2021	Transfer consultation results.
<b>No ability to turn off lights in bathrooms</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	Minimum lighting levels required by regulations do generally satisfy most of the office population. However, in those specific areas where this might cause distractions, it is recommended that those areas be investigated with respect to the age of the systems, including their design, operation and functioning of the lamps and ballasts so that further actions of improvement can be taken to remedy the situation.	April 2021	
<b>No gender-neutral bathrooms</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	PSPC is working toward establishing an approved functional directive for All Access Washroom.	March 2021	
<b>No or not enough single-stall bathrooms for privacy</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment	PSPC is working toward establishing an approved functional directive for All Access Washroom.	March 2021	





Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
		(OABE) – PSPC			
<b>Hallways and kitchens too narrow or cluttered</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	CSA B651-18, 5.1 Accessible routes width has increased. An accessible path of travel is now 1700mm minimum wide and aisles are 1000mm min. Doorways are now 850mm.	December 2020	New buildings, new space acquisitions and fit-up projects will incorporate updated requirements as part of the design and implementation.
		AND PSPC GCworkplace Team	Post-COVID increase in GCworkplace designs. Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual, including space between tables and chairs, between counter tops and tables, etc.		Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)
			For more information: GCworkplace Technical Reference Manual		
<b>Microwaves should be spread out around the kitchen to avoid crowding near them</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	Note already in the Technical Reference Manual: At least one microwave should be at counter height and that a pull out shelf under it is recommended.	March 2021	
<b>Fridges are too close together,</b>		Office of Accessibility	Tip to be added to the Design Guide. When there is more than 1	April 2021	Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference





Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>which causes crowding near them</b>		in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC  AND  PSPC GCworkplace Team	refrigerator, they should be at either end of millwork rather than side by side.  However, regardless of the refrigerator locations, crowding should be expected around noon at the refrigerators, sinks and microwaves in the kitchen areas.		Manual (to be launched in April 2021)
<b>Kitchen lights are too bright and not adjustable</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC  AND  PSPC GCworkplace Team	GCworkplace offers task lighting for various workpoints. It also suggest adding dimmable accent lighting for user adjustability. Minimum lighting levels required by regulations do generally satisfy most of the office population. However, in those specific areas where this might cause distractions, it is recommended that those areas be investigated with respect to the age of the systems, including their design, operation and functioning of the lamps and ballasts so that further actions of improvement can be taken to remedy the situation.	April 2021	





Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>No quiet areas to eat in or near kitchens</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	Add an accessibility tip/best practice to the Design Guide to suggest, where possible, the addition of huddles near the kitchen. Huddles are often designed to reduce noise disruptions.	March 2021	Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)
<b>Kitchen chairs are uncomfortable</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	GCworkplace offers a wide choice of different types of furniture including several ergonomic features.	April 2021	
<b>Kitchen chairs make noise when scraped on floor</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	This is not directly related to GCworkplace and would be different from one project to another but an accessibility tip could be added to the Technical Reference Manual to add glides under chairs to limit the scraping and noise associated to it.	March 2021	Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference Manual (to be launched in April 2021)
<b>Kitchens are too close to quiet work areas</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	GCworkplace is divided into 3 distinctive zones: a quiet zone, a transitional zone and a collaborative zone. The quiet and collaborative zones are usually at opposite sides of a floor and are composed of various enclosed or open workpoints.	April 2021	






Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			Kitchen are located in the collaborative zone, away from the quiet one.		
<b>Meeting rooms with glass walls are distracting because you can see people passing by</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	GCworkplace recommends glazing on enclosed rooms to allow maximum light infiltration and to optimize daylight infiltration to the floorplate to reduce the need for artificial lighting during peak daylight hours. Environments with more natural light and views to the outside promote mental and physical health and increase productivity. In addition, GCworkplace offers a variety of different meeting rooms. For example, some with frosted glazing, which might be preferred by some employees.	January 2021	
<b>Temperature is not adjustable at workpoints or in meeting rooms</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC  AND	This speaks to one of the many advantages to unassigned workpoints. People can chose the workpoint they prefer. Inevitably, some will be cooler and some warmer, based on the placement on the floorplate and proximity to windows / sun.	March 2021	






Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
		PSPC GCworkplace Team	If temperature are uncomfortable, a call must be placed to the National Service Call Center.		
<b>Meeting room acoustics cause echoes or amplify noise</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	Normally, the acoustic elements are designed to absorb sound and minimize reverberation. In today's modern Fitups, acoustic elements are integrated.	March 2021	
<b>Meeting rooms aren't set up with equipment to include people working from home</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team  AND  Departments IT branches, and Shared Services Canada (SSC)	Meeting rooms in GCworkplace have various designs some that include videoconference equipment.  Computer programs and applications are the responsibility of SSC and the departments. // However, GCworkplace is planning to test with different groups of users technology before using it in the workplace as a best practice.	April 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can improve the computer programs and applications.




Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>Poor audio quality on video meetings can trigger headaches</b>		Departments IT branches, and Shared Services Canada (SSC)	Computer programs and applications are the responsibility of SSC and the departments. // However, GCworkplace is planning to test with different groups of users technology before using it in the workplace as a best practice.	April 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can improve the computer programs and applications.
<b>Too many screens in meeting rooms are distracting</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	In a GCworkplace, meeting rooms have various designs to accommodate all preferences and needs. Employees should be able to find a meeting room with different numbers and locations of screens to meet their needs.	April 2021	
<b>Not enough large meeting rooms</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	Depending on the size of the workplace, GCworkplace accounts for a minimum quantity of large meeting rooms. The workpoint distribution reflects the data collected via client representatives, the Functional Programming process and/or the GCworkplace online survey.	April 2021	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>Exposed pipes or utility lines can be loud</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	In today's modern Fitups, acoustic elements are integrated to ensure sounds are absorbed and that reverberation are minimized.	March 2021	
<b>Noise from ventilation systems in meeting rooms or common areas is too loud</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC  AND  PSPC GCworkplace Team	In today's modern Fitups, acoustic elements are integrated to ensure sounds are absorbed and that reverberation are minimized.  However, HVAC is a reality that is inevitable. It provides our workplaces with fresh air and proper air circulation.	April 2021	
<b>Elevators are too crowded and noisy</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	Canada and the United States use the same standard for elevators (ASME A171-2016 / CSA B44-16).  The elevators are designed for a specific weight based on the number of people at a time, the weight is an essential part of the characteristic of the elevators. This is the reason why the number of people, as well as the	April 2021	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			<p>average weight are displayed inside the elevators. Now, it can happen that it looks crowded because people take up more space in the elevator like in a wheelchair or carry larger objects like a suitcase. Regarding noise, the facility manager must ensure that periodic assessments are carried out to ensure passenger safety.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, there may be a reduction in capacity in the interim. Application may vary depending on building owner and existing agreements but it is a priority to improving the built environment for people with all disabilities. Future accessibility requirements should take into consideration the most suitable application for the specific building and user needs.</p>		
<b>Buttons in elevators are too reflective to be readable</b>		Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	Buttons are identified by raised characters and Braille is mounted immediately to the left of the button that applies. In addition, the buttons include a raised ring, this ring allows visually impaired persons to detect	April 2021	






Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
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the button through the tactile character attached to it without the need to touch the button.

Canada and the United States use the same standard for elevators (ASME A171-2016 / CSA B44-16). The positions of the control buttons depend on the number of floors to be served, the location of the elevator, internal dimensions of the car, having a central or side door, having opposite doors, etc. However, all buttons include tactile / Braille, have a light and a sound is emitted when the destination is registered, while the light goes out and a sound or verbal announcement specifies the current floor as well as the direction of movement of the car. Due to COVID-19, there would be a new system being approved by CSA B-44 and ASME A171, whereby a person could call an elevator and choose their destination once inside, simply by using their smartphone. The studies are continuing their course, the ascents will be updated gradually






Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			<p>once approved, but it could take several years.</p> <p>New buildings, new space acquisitions and fit-up projects will incorporate updated requirements as part of the design and implementation.</p>		
<p><b>No display in elevators for people to know what floor they're at</b></p>		<p>Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC</p>	<p>In elevator car, audible and visible cab floor indicators shall be provided to identify the location of the car floor. The indicator is located above the car control panel or above the door, the digits should be at least 16mm high. In this case, it appears to be a maintenance issue, which should be reported to the Facility Manager for immediate corrective action.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, there would be a new system being approved by CSA B-44 and ASME A171, whereby a person could call an elevator and choose their destination once inside, simply by using their smartphone. The studies are continuing their course, the ascents will be updated</p>	<p>April 2021</p>	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			gradually once approved, but it could take several years.		
<b>Surprise fire drills affect people with sensory difficulties (noise from alarm, being in crowds, anxiety)</b>		Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Treasure Board Secretariat (TBS) and others	OABE is researching applications.	April 2021	Transfer consultation results to department.
<b>Nowhere quiet for employees during building construction</b>		GC employees and HR branches	In GCworkplace, employees can choose their work location and workpoint according to their preferences and needs. In a case of building construction, employees could decide to work from home, from a coworking site or from anywhere they feel comfortable working. They could also work from another floor in their building where there is no noise.	April 2021	



Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
<b>Scented cleaning products or strong disinfectants are used</b>		PSPC – Property and Facility Management Service Line	Transfer consultation results to PSPC’s Facility Management Service Line to see if/how they can fix the issue.	April 2021	
<b>Fake plants can have dust or mold</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	Integrating biophilia in our spaces speaks to employee wellbeing. Mold is not common in fake plants as they aren’t watered...and dust is a reality for everything. Cleaning and dusting them would have to be included in cleaning and maintenance contracts.	April 2021	
<b>Real plants can have bugs or allergens</b>		PSPC GCworkplace Team	Having real plants is common in public spaces such as commercial concourses and atrium spaces. Should they be integrated in the workplace, pollen free, greenery would most likely be chosen. Plant maintenance would reduce the probability of having bugs.	April 2021	



ENVIRONMENTAL / SENSORY