GCworkplace Consultation Series on Accessibility

PRELIMINARY REPORT – HEARING DISABILITIES

DATE: APRIL 13, 2021

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

HEARING DISABILITIES

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Introduction

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 hearing impairments were held on November 12 (in French) and December 15 (in English). Following the success of these sessions, another session in English was held on January 28, 2021.

Statistics

For hearing impairment sessions held on November 12 and December 15, 2020, and January 28, 2021.

# of participants	# of departments	# of regions
24	14	7
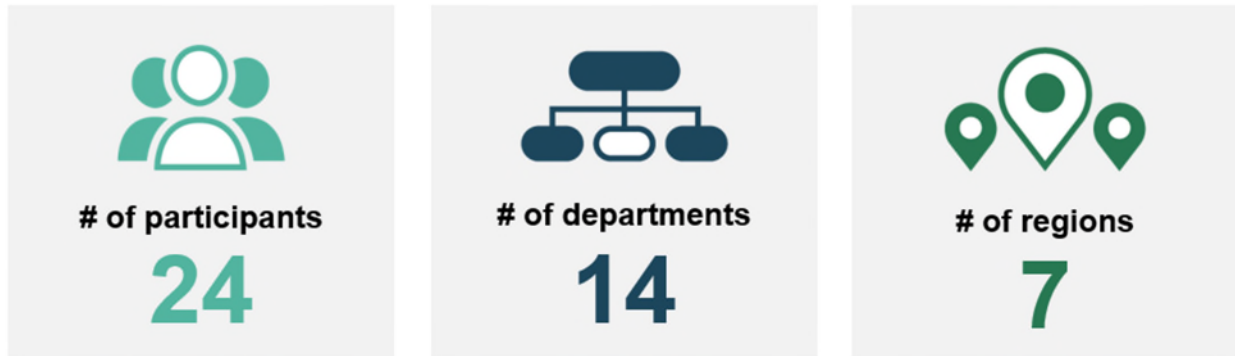
PARTICIPATING DEPARTMENTS

- Canada Revenue Agency
- Canada School of Public Service
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
- Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
- Canadian Space Agency
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Global Affairs Canada
- Health Canada
- National Research Council
- Parks Canada
- Public Service and Procurement Canada
- Service Canada
- Treasury Board Secretariat

PARTICIPATING REGIONS AND CITIES

> **National Capital Area**
> **Western (Edmonton)**
> **Atlantic (Shediac, Souris, Fredericton, Charlottetown)**
> **Ontario (Peterborough)**
> **Pacific (Vancouver)**
> **Quebec (St-Hubert)**
> **Other (Brussels)**

Comments

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

"It doesn't help to know sign language if no one around you knows it"

CURRENT WORKPLACES

"I've told everyone I'm deaf, yet people think I'm just ignoring them and get upset at me"

"The longer a meeting goes without a visual, the more cognitively and emotionally exhausting it becomes"

"When there's an emergency situation I can't hear the alarm or the instructions"

"There's no accommodation for people with hearing problems on the oral second language exams, so we can't move up the promotion ladder"

POSITIVES

When asked about their current workplaces, participants listed a few common positives. Multiple participants appreciated having their workpoints set up so that they faced the door, meaning that they weren't taken by surprise when someone came to see them. Participants also appreciated having small quiet rooms available for conversations with coworkers, because these enclosed spaces were well insulated and didn't have much background noise. Although participants were asked about their offices pre-pandemic, several participants mentioned that they appreciated working at home for the last year because the environment was so quiet.

CONCERNS

Participants felt that there were a lot of barriers in their current workplaces. Several common concerns arose.

Inaccessible meetings

Nearly every participant highlighted that meetings were extremely challenging for them. Many participants needed to be able to see the person speaking to be able to understand what was being said, and they weren't able to do that in meeting rooms with square or rectangular tables, or with tables that were too long. Participants struggled to hear people who spoke in low voices, and they also found it difficult to hear people who had called into the meeting due to the quality of microphones and speakers in boardrooms. Multiple participants said that side conversations or cross-talk by other participants made it very difficult for them to focus on the main conversation. The lack of closed-captioning and ASL at meetings—particularly at large meetings such as departmental town-halls, where participants couldn't see the presenters clearly—made it extremely difficult for participants to follow what was being said.

Participants also found virtual meetings challenging: automated options for closed captioning were not sufficient, live captioning or ASL interpretation was generally not available, people's video cutting out or lagging meant that participants lost the thread of the conversation and had a very hard time figuring out what was being said, and people using speaker phones or poor quality headsets made it difficult to understand what they were saying. Some participants did note that video calls were easier to manage than audio-only calls.

Background noise

Another major concern for participants was the amount of background noise in the office. This included noise from other people as well as noise from fans or HVAC systems. Participants had difficulty telling where noises were coming from, which disrupted their work as they tried to determine if someone was talking to them or simply talking near them. Several participants mentioned that when they are finding it difficult to understand someone who is talking to them because of background noise, they tend to raise their own voices without realizing that they're doing it, which can bother other employees. They also noted that, in spaces with lots of

background noise, their hearing aids aren't as useful because they amplify everything, including the background noise.

Lack of emergency plans

Multiple participants mentioned their concerns around emergencies, as they are unable to hear alarms or audible instructions. They stressed that there needed to be a way for them to know that there was an emergency, such as a pop-up on their computers or phones, or a screen with visible lights and written instructions. One participant described discovering they were alone on their floor because all the other employees had left due to a severe weather event—the announcement to go home had only been communicated orally and no one had thought to see if the participant had heard. Another participant noted that there needed to be a way for them to communicate from a stuck elevator as they aren't able to use the help phone to receive instructions.

Lack of understanding from others

Participants mentioned that, since theirs is an invisible disability, they face barriers from other employees. Many of these issues were accidental, not intentional—such as other employees not looking at them when they spoke, or people speaking over each other at meetings—but participants also noted that people had a tendency to forget that they had a hearing disability and would need to be regularly reminded. One participant said that they struggled with people in their office thinking they were being rude and ignoring others when in reality they simply couldn't hear that they were being spoken to.

Poor quality technology

Several participants noted that the phones and headsets that they and other employees were given were not of high enough quality for them to understand what other people were saying. Participants also noted that many headsets weren't sufficient because they weren't able to hear their own voices, so they couldn't tell how loudly they were speaking. Participants commented that meeting rooms should have technology that can connect via Bluetooth to allow them to link their Bluetooth hearing aids to audio systems, and they should also be equipped with video conferencing technology so that closed captioning is always an option.

DREAM WORKPLACES

"If people remembered that there are people with hearing loss so they take that into account when they're designing things"

DREAM WORKPLACES

"A quality headset that I can wear over my hearing aids or even in place of them with the same functionality"

"Have captions and translations available to make sure that communications work for everyone"

"I'd like to see smaller meetings and only one person talking at a time"

"I would love a culture where we can discuss accommodations and how to balance them"

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

Accessible boardrooms

Participants wanted boardrooms that were equipped with video-conferencing capability and good quality speakers and microphones. They also wanted technology to support the use of closed captioning in boardrooms and with Bluetooth capability so they could link their hearing aids directly to the room's audio system. Participants stressed that boardroom tables should be round whenever possible as that made it easier to see other employees and follow what they were saying than with tables that were square or rectangular. They also noted that during large meetings—for example, departmental town-halls—it's not enough to make sure that there are captions or screens: things like the ability to hear audience questions also need to be taken into account.

Quiet spaces

Participants commented that they wanted quiet places in their workplace where they could focus on their work without having to deal with a lot of background noise from other employees talking or from common spaces such as kitchens. They also wanted access to small, quiet, soundproof meeting rooms where they could have meetings or conversations with one or two other employees without hearing noises from outside the room and without worrying about whether their voices were too loud.

Workpoint design

Participants wanted their workpoints set up so that they could see anyone approaching them. They were split on whether they wanted high walls or low walls—some participants wanted high walls because it blocked the background noise around them, while others wanted low walls so they could see what was going on around them and know if someone was trying to talk to them. Participants stressed that background noises should be kept to a minimum at workpoints by designing them with carpeting or other sound insulation, enclosing machinery and pipes, and ensuring that employees have the ability to turn off overhead fans or lights.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS

"The phones they gave us, the audio was terrible and the headsets didn't work with my implant"

POTENTIAL BARRIERS

"I find it very hard when there's no noise dampening – I can hear everything but the sounds I want to hear"

"You can't read someone's lips when they're 40 feet down from you at the boardroom table"

"I couldn't understand the voice in the elevator to know what it was saying"

"It's exhausting to pretend to carry on a conversation in a kitchen where you can't hear anything"

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:

Boardrooms and meetings

As mentioned earlier, boardrooms and meetings were identified as a concern for virtually every participant. Large boardrooms in particular were flagged as an issue, because their size made it difficult for participants to see and hear other employees, and also because their size often meant that sounds (such as overhead fans or speakers) echoed more than in smaller spaces. Participants identified the lack of screens and technology to support closed captioning as a major barrier, as well as the layout of boardrooms and the shape of their tables.

Participants recommended making sure that large boardrooms were designed with sound dampening materials and layouts. A few participants commented that a living moss wall would absorb a lot of ambient sound. Participants stressed that the technology used needed to be of high quality to avoid fuzziness or echoing on phone lines. They noted that employees should have the ability to turn off overhead fans in meeting rooms to create a quieter space. Some participants suggested looking into getting "hearing loop" systems that are popular in Europe. Participants suggested having meetings rooms equipped with the right technology for videoconferencing, which would include software for live transcription and speech recognition. As noted earlier, participants strongly recommended having round tables whenever possible instead of square or rectangular ones to make it easier for them to see other employees while they were talking.

Open office design

Many participants identified issues with open office designs such as those in Workplace 2.0, particularly in areas with high ceilings. They found that sounds of all types—from obviously loud noises such as nearby conversations to less obvious sounds such as keyboard typing—echoed and bounced around in these areas. Several participants commented that these types of designs seemed to prioritize aesthetics over functionality. Participants noted concerns with having areas such as kitchens and photocopy rooms near offices, because the noises from those areas carried into the open offices. Multiple participants also identified a lack of small meeting rooms as a barrier, because it meant that colleagues would have conversations in the open office area instead of taking these conversations to a closed room.

Participants suggested that office designs have sound dampening elements built into them, such as using materials that absorb sound instead of metal or concrete. One participant commented that designers should take a decibel reader into any new space and measure the decibel level before designing or building anything so that they have an understanding of background decibels that need to be dampened. Participants stated that any noisy common areas, like kitchens or photocopy rooms, should be well away from offices and should also be sound insulated if possible. They also recommended having a lot of small meeting rooms available so that they were available for workplace conversations.

Common areas

Participants pointed out multiple barriers in common areas such as kitchens, elevators, and bathrooms. Kitchens were a source of a lot of stress for participants as they were generally quite loud, not only from conversations but also from the noises of microwaves, kettles, etc., meaning it was very difficult for participants to make sense of any sounds while in a kitchen. Elevators were another challenging environment. Participants found that the audio announcements often weren't clear enough to be understood, and there were no screens or other visual signals to show what floor they were at or which elevator was coming. They also commented that there should be a visual way of communicating in case of an emergency, as the emergency phone isn't very useful for many people with hearing disabilities since they can't hear instructions or get confirmation that someone has received their request for help. In bathrooms, participants couldn't hear when other employees or cleaners knocked on the door, nor could they tell sometimes if a bathroom was occupied without waiting to see if someone came out. They also found the noise from hand dryers very difficult to manage.

For kitchens, participants suggested having the food preparation area (microwaves, kettles, etc.) separate from the eating area, as this would remove some of the background noise. They also suggested making sure that any furniture in kitchens was not the kind that would make noise when it was moved—for example, chairs that scrape on the floor as they were pushed in or out. For elevators, participants recommended having screens both outside and inside elevators that clearly identified which elevators were coming and which floor they were stopping at. They suggested having a touchscreen inside each elevator that connected passengers with help if needed. In bathrooms, participants suggested having a light outside a stall or some other visual way to indicate that a stall was in use. They also noted that acoustics should be taken into account in bathroom design so that sound from hand dryers and flushing toilets didn't echo so much.

Second languages

Participants identified a number of barriers around the use of two languages in the workplace. Several participants noted that when presenters switched back and forth between two languages during a meeting, it made it very hard to lip read or otherwise follow what was being said. Participants also noted that there was a lack of accommodations for people with hearing disabilities who wanted to learn to speak a second language or take their second language oral tests, and they pointed out that this lack of accommodations can impede their career because they often aren't able to get promotions without a second language.

Participants suggested having simultaneous translation or multi-language closed captioning available at meetings which were going to be conducted in both official languages. They noted that there is software that will do this, so it isn't necessary to have live translation at every meeting. For second language training, participants wanted more flexibility for the way teachers approach the training—as one participant pointed out, the immersion approach (where a teacher only speaks to you in your second language) isn't useful for people who lip read and haven't learned to lip read in another language. For oral language tests, participants recommended having an in-person option available instead of conducting tests over the phone, which distorted the sound for many people.

Summary of Feedback

Symbol	Meaning
✓	The green checkmark icon means: this has been addressed by GCworkplace.
⊖	The yellow line icon means: this has partially been addressed by GCworkplace.
✗	The red x icon means: this has not been addressed by GCworkplace.
✳	The blue asterix icon means: outside the scope of GCworkplace.

HEARING DISABILITIES

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
Too much noise	✅	PSPC – GCworkplace Team	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. For more information: GCworkplace Design Guide - Design Guide Part 2 Key Design Principles	December 2020	
Length of time to get accommodations	⊖	PSPC – GCworkplace Team AND Departments HR Branches	GCworkplace removes part of this issue as many requirements are already in the space (height adjustable desks, ergonomic chairs, etc.). By integrating accessibility at the beginning of the design phase, GCworkplace is promoting an inclusive, equitable, and adaptive workplace.	December 2020	Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can facilitate and accelerate accommodation requests.

HEARING DISABILITIES

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
Accommodation for non-visible disabilities are harder to get or are not thought of automatically like visible disabilities	✳	Departments HR Branches		December 2020	Transfer consultation results to departments to see how they can change the way non-visible disabilities are dealt with.
Employees who need accommodations are often seated apart from the rest of their team	⊖	PSPC GCworkplace Team AND Departments HR Branches and accommodations teams	In a GCworkplace, employees can chose the best workpoint, based on their preferences, needs or where other colleagues are sitting. If a duty to accommodate is in place, it would be up to the accommodation team to find the best location to suit the employee's needs	March 2021	
Computer programs and applications are not accessible (e.g. won't work with accessibility software)	✳	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.	March 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
Lights are not adjustable at workpoints or in meeting rooms	✓	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	
Workpoints are set up facing away from the door, so it isn't possible to see people coming	➖	PSPC GCworkplace Team	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. 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	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
			focus room where the desk is facing the door. Accessibility tips will be added to the Technical Reference Manual. For more information: GCworkplace Technical Reference Manual		
Noises echo in areas with high ceilings or with exposed pipes/ducts	✅	PSPC GCworkplace Team	In today's modern Fitups, acoustic elements are integrated to ensure sounds are absorbed and that reverberation are minimized.	March 2021	
Phones provided don't have good quality audio	✱	Shared Services Canada (SSC) and departments IT branches	Shared Services Canada (SSC) and departments IT branches	March 2021	Transfer consultation results SSC and departments IT branches to see what they are working on that could help with the issue.
Headsets provided don't fully cover ears or sufficiently block background noise	✱	Shared Services Canada (SSC) and departments IT branches	Purchase of noise-cancelling headphones or headsets are the responsibility of the department.	January 2021	Transfer consultation results SSC and departments IT branches to see what they are

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
					working on that could help with the issue.
Headsets don't permit employees to hear their own voices	✳	Shared Services Canada (SSC) and departments IT branches	Purchase of noise-cancelling headphones or headsets are the responsibility of the department.	March 2021	Transfer consultation results SSC and departments IT branches to see what they are working on that could help with the issue.
Laptop speakers aren't loud enough and no other speakers are provided	✳	Shared Services Canada (SSC) and departments IT branches	Purchase of speakers are the responsibility of the department.	March 2021	Transfer consultation results SSC and departments IT branches to see what they are working on that could help with the issue.
Weak or patchy Internet connections make it hard to follow video calls	✅	Shared Services Canada (SSC) AND PSPC GCworkplace Team	As employees are encouraged to be mobile in a GCworkplace, Wi-Fi is installed and fully functional in all GCworkplace sites.	March 2021	

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
Not enough accessible washrooms	⊖	Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC		December 2020	New buildings, new space acquisitions, and fit-up projects will incorporate updated requirements as part of the design and implementation.
No visual way to tell if a bathroom is occupied	✳	Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	As an enhancement, a vacancy notification light could be recommended for All Access washrooms / showers.	March 2021	
Noises in bathrooms (hand dryers, flushing toilets) echo too loudly	✳	Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	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. Depending on where this problem occurs, adding automatic paper towel dispensers would be an option. Note that blade hand dryers generate less noise, but are not always suitable for seated people (hands folded down), so towels	March 2021	

HEARING DISABILITIES

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			would respond to other deficiencies as well.		
Bathroom stalls should be fully enclosed	✳	Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	Typical male and female washroom stalls are normally not enclosed fully due to the required efficient air flushing of foul air to mitigate stagnation which affects health and safety concerns.	March 2021	
Kettles and other appliances are not accessible (e.g., no visual way to know when a kettle has boiled)	✳	Client departments	Kettles and other appliances are not usually bought through a GCworkplace project.

Research could be done to find the best possible options and added to some tips or best practices documents. | March 2021 | |
| **Noises echo in kitchens** | ✅ | GCworkplace Team | Normally, the acoustic elements are designed to absorb sound and minimize reverberation. In today's modern Fitups, acoustic elements are integrated.

However, following comments received through the consultations series, we will add an accessibility | March 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
			tip to the Technical Reference Manual to suggest, where possible, the addition of huddles near the kitchen but not directly in it. Huddles are designed to reduce noise.		
Chairs scrape on the floor when moved and make a lot of noise	⊖	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)
Meeting room tables are too long to see people at the other end	✓	GCworkplace Team	In a GCworkplace, there various types of meeting rooms to allow employees to choose the size and set-up that best fits their needs. In some larger meeting rooms, it is also possible to rearrange the furniture according to the participants needs.	March 2021	
Meeting room tables are often square or rectangular, so it's	⊖	GCworkplace Team	Following comments received through the consultations series, we will add an accessibility tip to	March 2021	Add accessibility tips to the Technical Reference

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
hard to see everyone's faces			the Technical Reference Manual to suggest the addition of round tables in some meeting rooms and in kitchens.		Manual (to be launched in April 2021)
Meeting rooms don't have screens or technology to permit closed captioning or live transcription	✳	Departments HR branches, Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) and maybe Shared Services Canada (SSC)		January 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments, to OPSA and SSC to see what they are working on that could help with the issue. This subject will be added as a potential discussion subject for a brainstorming session part of the GCworkplace Accessibility Community of Practice and Interest.
Some programs used for closed captioning don't work in both official languages	✳	Departments HR branches, Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) and maybe Shared		March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments, to OPSA and SSC to see what they are working on that could help with the issue.

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
		Services Canada (SSC)			This subject will be added as a potential discussion subject for a brainstorming session part of the [GCworkplace Accessibility Community of Practice and Interest](#).
Meeting rooms aren't equipped for videoconferencing	✅	PSPC GCworkplace Team AND Shared Services Canada (SSC)	As the seven dimensions of GCworkplace include flexibility and mobility, it is recommended that employees working in a GCworkplace have the various technological tools, including videoconferencing directly on their laptops so they can use them from any workpoints. Depending on the department's needs, some meeting rooms can be equipped with technologies such as videoconferencing.	March 2021	
Meeting rooms aren't equipped with Bluetooth	✳	Departments HR branches, Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) and		March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments, to OPSA and SSC to see what they are

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
		maybe Shared Services Canada (SSC)			working on that could help with the issue.

This subject will be added as a potential discussion subject for a brainstorming session part of the GCworkplace Accessibility Community of Practice and Interest. |
| **Overhead fans in meeting rooms can't be turned off** | ✳ | Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC | Overhead fans in meeting rooms can normally be turned off but the switch location should be identified. | | |
| **Microphones and speakers in meeting rooms are not high quality enough to avoid background noise and garbled words** | ✳ | Departments HR & IT branches, Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) and maybe Shared Services Canada (SSC) | | March 2021 | Transfer consultation results to departments, to OPSA and SSC to see what they are working on that could help with the issue.

This subject will be added as a potential discussion subject for a brainstorming session |

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
					part of the GCworkplace Accessibility Community of Practice and Interest.
Cross-talk/side conversations in meetings make it hard to hear	✳	GC employees and Client Departments	This is something that needs to be addressed as part of a culture change, not through GCworkplace. As a first step, awareness needs to be made around this issue, through communications.	March 2021	
No live closed captioning or ASL offered for meetings	✳	Departments HR & IT branches, Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) and maybe Shared Services Canada (SSC)		March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments, to OPSA and SSC to see what they are working on that could help with the issue.

This subject will be added as a potential discussion subject for a brainstorming session part of the GCworkplace Accessibility Community of Practice and Interest. |

HEARING DISABILITIES

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
At large events, audience questions aren't amplified	✳	GC employees and Events Management Teams and Departments	This is something that needs to be addressed as part of a culture change, not through GCworkplace. As a first step, awareness needs to be made around this issue, through communications.	March 2021	
Not enough small quiet rooms	✓	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	

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
Elevators with vocal/computer are hard to hear	✖	Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	OABE is looking at a variety of options for a more inclusive and pandemic resistant environment. One solution may not meet everyone's needs.	December 2020	More research, engagement and analysis to help ensure inclusivity.
Elevators should have a screen inside to identify which floor they are stopping at	✳	Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	Modern elevators do normally come with screens and more technological features nowadays but most of the older elevators may not have the capability to accommodate such new technology. This will require a case by case analysis for planning of elevator modernization.	March 2021	
Elevators should have a visual way (e.g. a touchscreen or wifi) to communicate in an emergency	✳	Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	Modern elevators do normally come with screens and more technological features nowadays but most of the older elevators may not have the capability to accommodate such new technology. This will require a case by case analysis for planning of elevator modernization.	March 2021	

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
It is difficult to identify which elevator is arriving	✳	Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	This depends on the age of the elevators and requires a review of specific installation and location.	March 2021	
Employees with hearing impairments can't hear emergency alarms or instructions	✳	Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	This issue is location specific based determination and requires a specific study of the space configuration.	March 2021	
Some emergency instructions are only communicated verbally	✳	Office of Accessibility in the Built Environment (OABE) – PSPC	CSA: Emergency and security alarms should include both audible and visual signals. Visible alarms should consist of lights that flash in conjunction with the audible emergency alarm, and are placed so that a signal from at least one alarm is visible throughout any enclosed space. This CSA requirement may not be incorporated into older buildings/fit-ups. The visual alarms should be part of any new construction projects and major renovations.	March 2021	

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
			According Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (COHSR): …equipped with an alarm that will, if the equipment fails, be activated automatically and be audible or visible to every person in the confined space… and… where information, including warnings, is required by these Regulations to be provided by means of a sign or marking, the alternate medium shall be visible or audible to an employee with a special need. These procedures are in place in all Federal Real Property and leased spaces for a save and ordinate emergency evacuation from the building this include a specific procedure for persons with disability.		
Second language training doesn't account for hearing	✳	Departments HR, Office of Public Service		March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments, to OPSA and SSC to see what they are

Issue/Barrier Raised	Already addressed by GCworkplace or others?	OPI	Explanation	Status Date	Future Improvements
impairments or lip readers		Accessibility (OPSA)			working on that could help with the issue.
Second language oral tests must be done over the phone	✳	Departments HR, Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA)		March 2021	Transfer consultation results to departments, to OPSA and SSC to see what they are working on that could help with the issue.