PARLIAMENTARY PROTECTIVE SERVICE
SERVICE DE PROTECTION PARLEMENTAIRE
CANADA

PPS Accessibility Plan
Version 1.0

December 9, 2022

PPS ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Version 1.0

December 9, 2022

Parliament Hill, Canada

Table of Contents

Message from the Director

The Parliamentary Protective Service (the Service) is often the first point of contact for parliamentarians, staff and visitors who frequent the Hill. Our protection officers, detection specialists, operators and administrative staff strive every day to deliver on our mission to protect Canada's Parliament and to do so in an inclusive and welcoming way.

In order to better meet the needs of people living with disabilities, the Service commits to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility. We have committed to incorporating legislative requirements into our policies, procedures and training for all employees.

Our 2021–2024 Strategic Plan clearly illustrates that to achieve our priorities of operational excellence and high performance, our drivers are engagement, inclusion and a positive, supportive environment. Our commitment in this area was further solidified when, in September 2021, we hired a Special Advisor for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging who is leading us in a process of learning and unlearning.

Whether you are part of the PPS family or a guest on the Hill, we strive to make every interaction a positive one. Supported by our core organizational values of respect, professionalism, integrity, accountability and leadership, we work every day to embrace Canada's diversity and that of all who visit here.

I believe that together with our partners, we can achieve a Parliament Hill that is barrier-free.

Larry Brookson
Acting Director, Parliamentary Protective Service

General

The Special Advisor, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, and the Chief Planning Officer are jointly responsible for leading the Service's accessibility initiatives and for receiving inquiries and feedback on barriers and this plan. Accessibility-related inquiries can be directed to:

> **613-943-9001** (Note: This number is not for PPS general inquiries.)
> ppsaccessiblespp@pps-spp.parl.gc.ca

For all other inquiries, please contact: communications@pps-spp.parl.gc.ca.

Messages will be directed to both the Special Advisor, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, and the Chief Planning Officer for action. An online feedback form is also available on the Service's external website, www.pps.parl.ca (English) or www.spp.parl.ca (French).

Accessibility Statement

The Parliamentary Protective Service believes in ensuring a barrier-free workplace and experience for all who visit the Parliamentary Precinct. The Service is committed to providing accessible services to parliamentarians, employees and visitors, and we are committed to meeting all of our legislative obligations under the *Accessible Canada Act*.

The Plan names accessibility leads for each area, recognizes previously identified barriers and outlines what actions we intend to take to remove these barriers. In the coming months, these planned actions will be integrated into the Service's Strategic and Sector Plans, as appropriate, and monitored until completion. The Service intends to provide an update on these actions every three years.

Our public website is compatible with assistive technologies and works best on the latest versions of the most popular web browsers. Our website relies on the following technologies for conformance with these guidelines:

- HTML

- WAAP 2.0 AA

This plan has been published on our website www.pps.parl.ca (English) or www.spp.parl.ca (French), and other formats can be requested via our online feedback form.

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Lead: Chief Operations Officer

The Service will ensure its protection mandate is delivered respectfully and free of any barriers to all parliamentarians, employees and visitors.

Current State

- The PPS's current protocols, procedures and policies are based on precedent rather than input from subject-matter experts (SMEs) in accessibility.
- Supporting those with accessibility needs has been done on a case-by-case basis: specific training or expert-reviewed procedures are not common.
- Limited awareness of accessibility standards.

Actions

- Engage with internal and external SMEs to identify improvements to our services and how they are delivered to people with disabilities.
- Develop and apply an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) lens, including an accessibility lens, to policies, standard operating procedures (SOPs), training standards and policy instruments.
    - Find and complete training sessions to increase awareness of accessibility standards for policy and instrument writers.
- Ensure the requirements of all positions are reviewed on a regular basis.

Employment

Lead: Chief Human Resources Officer

The Service will implement accessible and inclusive human resource practices so that all employees are supported and can achieve their full potential within the organization.

Current State

- Ensure the Service's human resource programs, policies, procedures, and practices (e.g. talent acquisition and management, accommodations, onboarding) are aligned and remain aligned with best practices to ensure they are accessible and inclusive, and to identify and remove any barriers for people with disabilities.
- Limited employee awareness of accessibility and accessibility-related topics (e.g. accessibility barriers, unconscious bias and accommodation for persons with disabilities).
- Insufficient human resource data as it relates to persons with disabilities within the Service, including recruitment, advancement and retention.

Actions

- Review current human resource processes, policies, procedures, and training to identify possible barriers for persons with disabilities and create an action plan to address these gaps.
- Prepare an awareness campaign for managers and human resource professionals about best practices in creating accessible talent acquisition processes, which includes identifying opportunities to reduce barriers related to the candidate's experience.
- Raise overall management awareness of accommodation and hiring processes.
- Prioritize compliance with World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) WCAG 2.1 AA standards when assessing talent acquisition systems and related tools or offer alternative approaches to reduce barriers for the candidate.
- Continue to participate, as a leading member, in initiatives and form partnerships with organizations such as the Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN) led by United Way East Ontario, which brings together employers and service providers with the goal of increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Ottawa.
- Leverage training offered by parliamentary partners and government organizations on accessibility and accessibility-related issues (accessibility barriers, unconscious bias, stigmas surrounding disability, etc.).
- Research accommodation support tools used by parliamentary partners or government organizations (e.g. Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport), discussing potential new tools with parliamentary partners and aligning practices whenever possible.
- Develop an updated and comprehensive onboarding process that includes tools and resources that are accessible to all employees. Consult employees with disabilities to understand areas of the current onboarding process that could be improved.
- As part of the new Enterprise Resource Planning system implementation, the Service will launch a modernized Self-Identification (self-ID) questionnaire to increase the accuracy, depth and breadth of its current data related to persons with disabilities within the Service.
- Continue to support and promote initiatives such as the existing Parliament Hill Employee Networking Group, which includes a networking group for employees with disabilities.
- Review the Service's workplace accommodation process, in collaboration with the network of employees with disabilities, to identify streamlining opportunities.

The Built Environment
Lead: Chief Planning Officer

The Service, in accordance with the Partners Engagement Protocol being facilitated by Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), will actively participate in identifying, prioritizing and addressing barriers that may be present within its premises which could potentially impede persons with disabilities from accessing and circulating within our spaces.

Led by the Science and Parliamentary Infrastructure Branch (SPIB)–Universal Accessibility (UA) team, a UA Audit will be initiated to determine the required improvements for the Service's facilities. The audit will allow the Service to have a clear view of the actions required in its Service-specific areas.

In line with the essence of the UA Audit, the Service will also improve accessibility within other active locations. This analysis will include, but is not limited to:

- PPS Headquarters
- PPS operational, training and administrative spaces throughout the Parliamentary Precinct

Premises with either known issues or immediate needs will be prioritized.

The verification sequence will be planned according to varied factors and known information, including employees or clients who have self-identified as living with a disability.

The information gathered throughout the UA Audit will help the Service identify and establish the corrections needed, as well as their complexity, the timeline, cost and resources required. In addition, it will help improve the monitoring of each space and will contribute to the ongoing effort to identify and remove existing barriers, while preventing new ones from emerging in the future.

Collaboration during this process will be crucial, as other partners can contribute actively or passively by sharing their knowledge on what has already been accomplished. Our decisions may be inspired by their past projects and experiences.

Current State

- Identify and remove physical barriers to ensure accessibility in facilities under the Service's responsibility.
- Work with PSPC and other partners to identify and remove barriers in the built environment not under the Service's responsibility.
- Review our operational areas (e.g. scanning and detection areas).
- Identify barriers in emergency procedures and business continuity plans.

Actions

- Support parliamentary partners' accessibility efforts within the Parliamentary Precinct.
- Support PSPC's UA Audit.
- Perform accessibility assessments of existing PPS facilities and spaces, including scanning and detection areas.
- Remove or mitigate barriers for clients and all employees, in both our operational and administrative facilities.
- Ensure new facilities are accessible and barrier-free.
- Perform accessibility assessments for any employee who has self-identified as having a disability.
- Ensure fire warden training includes procedures for persons with disabilities.
- Discuss best practices with SMEs and persons with disabilities.
- Track progress and performance management.

Corporate Communications

Lead: Chief Planning Officer

The Corporate Communications Branch intends to ensure all information shared both internally and externally is fully accessible to all parliamentarians, employees and visitors, as applicable. It will also respond to requests it receives in the format of the request.

Current State

- Existing tools and products may not meet accessibility standards.
- Limited knowledge of accessibility standards.
- Most of our communications products may not meet accessibility standards. Current creation of documents (outside of the Corporate Communications Branch) across the organization may not be following basic accessibility best practices.

Actions

- Research existing training on accessibility standards offered by parliamentary partners and government organizations, as well as the private sector and academia.
- Find and complete training sessions to increase knowledge of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA requirements for the Corporate Communications team.

Find and complete training on clear and simple language

- Evaluate and review communications products and templates in accordance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements.

- Develop processes to ensure that all future content is published in accordance with the guidelines.
- Provide accessibility contact information on the external website.
- Publish our accessibility plan on the external website and make it available in alternative formats upon request.
- Assist HR in creating an awareness campaign for managers.
- Prepare an awareness campaign for all staff on stigmas associated with persons with disabilities and best practices for service provision.

Information and Technologies

Lead: Chief Information Officer

Ensuring the Service's Information and Technologies tools are accessible is key to this Plan. Public-facing and in-house tools and documentation must be developed and published in a way that ensures our services are delivered barrier free to everyone. We must also ensure that any current or future employees with disabilities have all the tools and supports needed to fully engage in the workplace.

Current State

- Inquiries may not be able to be responded to in the way they were submitted.
- Existing IT systems, hardware and software may not meet accessibility standards.
- Limited knowledge of accessibility standards.

Actions

- Assess the level of knowledge within TIS on how to meet accessibility standards.
- Research existing training on accessibility standards offered by parliamentary partners and government organizations, as well as the private sector and academia.
- Engage with HR and Communications Branches to provide training on how to use specialized software and IT tools to meet accessibility needs.
- Provide training to all employees on accessibility, barriers and the needs of persons with disabilities and how to build it as a consideration into the assessment, implementation or development of systems, hardware and software.
- Review all applications, systems and technologies used at the Service for accessibility issues and remedy any barriers.
- Develop a process to ensure new and existing IT systems, hardware and software, whether they are procured or developed internally, meet the leading accessibility standards, and implement appropriate changes that may be required to meet those standards.

- Engage with parliamentary partners to identify and deploy accessilbe tools and technology, and remove remaining accessibility barriers associated with IT.
- Consider accessibility in the lifecycle management process for existing IT solutions and equipment, including web content.
- Develop a process where users can test IT systems, hardware and software to ensure they meet accessibility requirements.
- Engage regularly with persons with disabilities on the accessibility of information and communications tools and technology through surveys and consultations, and assess and test accessibility.
- Working alongside HR, provide tools and best practices for how to create accessible documents leveraging templates or program functionalities.

Procurement of Goods and Services

Lead: Chief Financial Officer

The Service regularly procures goods and services to successfully deliver on its protection mandate. As part of this Plan, the Service will identify and address any accessibility-related barriers to its procurement processes.

Current State

- Identify accessibility barriers in the delivery of the goods and services procurement process.
- Identify accessibility sourcing early in the procurement process.

Actions

- Develop a list of bidders who can accommodate accessibility needs.
- Explore how submissions can be submitted in various formats.
- Explore how accessibility needs can be grouped within common Statements of Work.
- Develop Statement of Work documents into formal, accessible Requests for Proposal.
- Develop an awareness and communication plan to help employees understand the reasons to consider accessibility from the beginning the procurement process.
- Research the feasibility of adding a clause in contracts to ensure accessibility in the delivery and implementation of goods, services or technical solutions, and to ensure that accessibility requirements are considered during future updates or changes to services or technical solutions.
- Discuss best practices with SMEs and persons with disabilities.

Transportation

Lead: Chief Financial Officer

The Service operates a fleet of operational (marked) vehicles and support vehicles. The Service also provides parking facilities for its fleet and some of its employees.

Current State

- Accessible parking is limited.

Actions

- Review Vehicle Management Policy to consider how operational vehicles might be used to accommodate persons with disabilities (e.g. if someone needed to be temporarily seated or sheltered).
- Identify alternative procedures for accommodating people with disabilities who are detained or arrested.
- Review the necessity of wheelchair-accessible vehicles in the PPS fleet.
- Develop procedures for accessing accessible parking spaces in PPS locations.

Conclusion

The Service is committed to actively working toward creating a barrier-free environment for all parliamentarians, employees and visitors. Engagement with people with disabilities and subject-matter experts is essential to gaining a better understanding of the barriers present in our work environments that prohibit the full engagement of people with disabilities. Working to create inclusive spaces, programs and service delivery is a priority for the Service and an essential part of our Strategic Plan.

This plan is an evergreen document that will be revisited and updated every year in consultation with people with disabilities.

Appendix A: Consultations

The Service consulted with employees about accessibility using several different methods.

Online questionnaire

An online questionnaire was sent to all (600+) employees and was open for almost four weeks. Questions included:

- Self-identification
- Please describe any barriers or obstacles that you have encountered or observed at the Parliamentary Protective Service or within the Parliamentary Precinct.
- Do you have any suggestions on how to remove the barriers that you have identified? What would you prioritize?
- In terms of accessibility, what are we doing well?
- Can we contact you for further consultations on accessibility?

There were 17 responses, and none of the respondents identified themselves as a person with a disability. While the number of respondents was lower than hoped, it will serve as a baseline for future consultations. The raw responses are provided below in the language used by each respondent:

- *Nos salles de repos a certains édifice sont trop petits.*
- *Communications are very text heavy*
- *Many operational roles are focused on physical requirements*
- *Access to meeting rooms is not always accessible*
- *No barriers to my experience.*
- *Pour une personne ayant une déficience visuelle, on a besoin de logiciels de conversion en braille et de clavier en braille.*
- *Aucun pour l'instant*
- *Slow mechanical doors and or broken mechanism.*
- *High front desk not accessible.*
- *None, HoC, Senate and PPS seem to be very concerned with accessibility and I can't think of anywhere on the precinct that cannot be accessed with a wheelchair.*
- *Plusieurs acces au toilettes dans les vieux edifices sont extrement non amical pour les gens en chaise roulante spcialement dans les galleries*

Virtual and in-person consultation sessions

The Service offered one-on-one or small group sessions to all of its employees. There were no requests.

'Coffee talk' on accessibility

The Service has held 'coffee talks' or virtual discussions open to all employees for some time. These are opportunities for employees at all levels to meet others, share experiences and connect with people across the Service. In the fall of 2022, one of these sessions was dedicated to accessibility. Six employees from various sectors participated, and below is a summary of the discussion:

- Over the years, the Service has served parliamentarians and visitors with a wide variety of disabilities.
- Services for people with disabilities have been provided on a case-by-case basis.
- No one is aware of any complaints related to serving people with disabilities.
- While not all of our procedures explicitly outline how to serve people with disabilities, the Service has historically relied on a 'common sense' approach.