



National  
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# 2022 Corrective Defence Team Accessibility Plan

June 2024

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## Foreword

The enclosed 2022 Defence Team Corrective Accessibility Plan is written in response to feedback and guidance received from the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) on the Defence Team's initial plan published in December 2022. The corrective plan is being published in June 2024 with the intent of publishing a 2024 progress report on plan implementation in December 2024 subsequently to be followed by the 2025 Accessibility Plan in December 2025.

This 1-year plan refocuses efforts on concrete actions to the identification, removal and prevention of accessibility barriers that we as the Defence Team believe will set the necessary foundation to build on moving forward. Through various levels of consultations with persons with disabilities and subject matter experts in each of the priority areas, the plan outlines a balanced approach to implementation that moves the organization forward in an intentional way. Although the scope of activities reflected in this plan may not be expansive, the activities are deliberate, concrete, and actionable.

The rewriting of the 2022 Accessibility Plan provided the Defence Team the occasion to learn with openness and genuine curiosity, take stock of lessons learned and renew its commitments towards building an accessible-confident Defence Team. The successful implementation of this plan will rely heavily on individual and collective understanding of and commitment to accessibility and disability inclusion.

## General

### Feedback Process Description

#### Designated person to receive feedback

The Director Inclusion, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC) is designated to receive accessibility-related feedback from the public, employees of DND, and members of the CAF on behalf of the Defence Team and is the Executive responsible for the Defence Team accessibility program.

#### Feedback you can submit

Feedback on this accessibility plan or any barriers experienced when interacting with Defence Team services, programs, policies, practices, websites, plans and reports, or offices can be submitted through the feedback process.

#### How we will use your feedback

Your feedback will be used to improve accessibility at DND and the CAF. Feedback may be addressed right away or be used to advance future accessibility plans and improve overall accessibility for the Defence Team.

All feedback will be taken seriously and treated in a way that respects the privacy and confidentiality of individuals who submit feedback. Feedback received will be reflected

in future accessibility plans and progress reports and will not be associated with an individual's name. Any personal information associated with the feedback will only be shared with Defence Team employees directly involved in improving accessibility at DND and the CAF. If you wish to remain anonymous, you do not have to include your name when submitting your feedback.

## How to submit feedback

There are various ways to submit feedback. Feedback can be submitted either with an identified contact or anonymously. Feedback received will be acknowledged in the same way it was received unless the feedback is received anonymously.

- **Online:** through the online [Defence Team accessibility feedback form](#).
- **By email:** at [DND Accessibility-Accessibilite MDN@forces.gc.ca](mailto:MDN@forces.gc.ca)
- [Video Relay Service](#) available in American Sign Language (ASL) or langue des signes Québécoise (LSQ)
- **By mail:**  
Attn: Defence Team Accessibility Office – Chief Professional Conduct and Culture  
National Defence Headquarters (Carling Campus)  
60 Moodie Drive  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K2

## Alternate formats

To request a copy of the Defence Team Accessibility Plan or Feedback Process in an alternate format, please contact the Defence Team using the contact information listed above.

The following formats are available on demand.

- Large print (larger, clearer font).
- Braille (a system of raised dots that blind or visually impaired people can read with their fingers).
- Audio format (recording of someone reading the text aloud).
- Electronic formats compatible with adapted technology.

## The Defence Team: Who We Are & What We Do

DND supports the CAF who serve on the sea, on land, and in the air with the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Air Force and the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command to defend Canadians' interests at home and abroad.

DND and the CAF have complementary roles to play in providing advice and support to the Minister of National Defence. Together, this integrated civilian-military Defence Team works together to fulfill the Government of Canada's mission to defend Canadian interest and values and contribute to international peace and security.

Addressing accessibility in the DND/CAF context presents certain challenges due to the nature of the Defence Team, as it blends the public service with a military environment, which is governed under the Defence act and administered by a unique set of rules.

More information on the [Defence Team and its mandate](#) is available online.

## The Accessible Canada Act

The [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA) came into force July 11, 2019 with the purpose of achieving a barrier-free Canada by January 1, 2040. The *Act* applies to all organizations under federal responsibility, including the CAF, and mandates a proactive and systemic approach to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities in seven specific priority areas:

- employment;
- built environment;
- information and communication technologies;
- communication;
- the procurement of goods, services and facilities;
- the design and delivery of programs and services; and
- transportation.

The ACA is to be implemented in recognition of, and in accordance with, the following principles:

- Everyone must be treated with dignity.
- Everyone must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the life they are able and wish to have.
- Everyone must be able to participate fully and equally in society.
- Everyone must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire.
- Laws, policies, programs, services, and structures must consider the ways that different kinds of barriers and discrimination intersect.
- Persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services, and structures.
- Accessibility standards and regulations must be made with the goal of achieving the highest level of accessibility.

The ACA requires that all federal departments and agencies:

- **Prepare and publish an accessibility plan every three years:**

- Develop accessibility plans to identify, remove and prevent barriers in the priority areas in their policies, programs, practices and services.
- Update plans every 3 years.
- Consult with people with disabilities when creating and updating plans.
- **Establish and publish a feedback process:**
  - Establish a feedback process to receive and address feedback on plans and accessibility barriers.
- **Prepare and publish annual progress reports on plan implementation:**
  - Develop regular progress reports in the years between our updated accessibility plans that describe the actions the organization has taken to implement their accessibility plans.
  - Include information on feedback received and how the organization took the feedback into consideration.
  - Consult with people with disabilities when preparing their reports.

A [summary of the Accessible Canada Act](#) is available online.

## Accessible Canada Act Definitions

### **accessibility**

The degree to which a product, service, program or environment can be accessed or used by all.

### **accommodation**

Any change in the work environment that allows a person with functional limitations to do their job. Accommodations can be temporary, periodic or long-term.

### **barrier**

Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. Barriers can be physical, architectural, technological, attitudinal or based on information or communications. They can also be the result of a policy or practice.

### **disability**

A disability is any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.

## Universality of Service

The principle of Universality of Service (U of S) mandates CAF members to perform any required function “at all times and under any circumstances”. Those members who incur

injuries or develop illnesses that permanently preclude them from doing so are released from the CAF under this principle. The U of S principle is an important enabler for the CAF allowing it to meet its operational obligations and is expressly recognized in the [Canadian Human Rights Act \(CHRA\)](#) and the [Accessible Canada Act \(ACA\)](#). It has also been recognized by the courts. It is fundamental in enabling the CAF to also meet Canada's Defence Policy objectives and the CAF's operational requirements while simultaneously respecting Canada's laws.

At its core, the U of S principle holds that all CAF members possess the same baseline level of capability, regardless of environmental service, rank, or occupation to perform general military duties and common defence and security duties, not just the duties of their military occupation or occupation specification. Its related minimum operational standards ([DAOD 5023 series](#)) support this.

While the *ACA* applies to both DND and the CAF, given the unique nature of its operations, the CAF will take into account the operational requirements of the institution in determining the limits of any accommodation. This overlap in direction creates complexities in the application of the *ACA* within the Defence Team. Moving forward, the CAF is committed to reviewing and modernizing its internal policies, including but not limited to U of S policy and standards, to continue striving for better alignment between the DND and the CAF and response to the evolution of the CAF's roles and operations and to consider developments in Canadian Human Rights law (i.e., the *ACA*, *CHRA*, [Employment Equity Act](#), etc.) while balancing considerations for operational impacts.

## Consultations

The Defence Team recognizes that addressing barriers in a meaningful, impactful and lasting way involves ongoing and committed consultation with persons with disabilities. To ensure this is possible, the Defence Team is currently reviewing its approach to consultations to build on its current consultative activities. Examples of considerations include the following:

- How future engagements can incorporate more of an intersectional lens; and
- How balance of engaging early in the process as well as throughout the process can be realized without placing additional burden on persons with disabilities due to over consultation.

Taking the time to reflect on these considerations will help ensure that the Defence Team remains agile in its efforts to remove barriers while also ensuring that planned activities and those underway remain relevant.

The barrier sections listed under each of the priority areas of the plan are informed by the following consultation mechanisms.

## Annual Defence Team 2024 Accessibility Survey

In January 2024, the Defence Team launched the first version of its annual accessibility survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback on barriers to accessibility at DND and the CAF. The survey also provided an opportunity for the Defence Team to better understand the experiences of persons with disabilities in the workplace to make it more accessible and inclusive.

The survey was open to all employees of DND and members of the CAF, regardless of whether they self-identified as a person with a disability or not. Participants were encouraged to respond to any or all questions they felt comfortable answering.

### Survey participation at a glance:

- ✓ 461 total participants.
- ✓ 71% of participants identified as a civilian DND employee while 29% identified as a CAF member.
- ✓ 43% of participants identified as a person with a disability or disabilities while 6% preferred not to specify.

Barriers identified from the survey results were shared with the L3 Accessibility Working Group to help inform the identification of necessary activities and commitments to address the barriers.

As this was the first iteration of the Defence Team Accessibility Survey, various areas of improvement were identified and will be considered for future iterations. Due to the timing of the survey launch and the timelines of the development of the enclosed corrective plan, the survey was only open for two weeks, which affected uptake in survey participation. Future iterations of the survey will be open for longer to provide additional time for participants to complete the survey. In addition, supplementary survey methods in addition to the online form will be explored moving forward to ensure greater opportunity of participation for CAF members whose work environment may not be suitable for participation in online surveys.

## Defence Advisory Groups

Defence Advisory Groups (DAGs) are employment equity advisory groups comprised of volunteer serving CAF members and DND public service employees. DAGs provide advice and recommendations to Defence Team leadership and play a role in identifying systemic employment equity barriers.

The National and Local co-chairs of the Defence Advisory Group for Persons with Disabilities (DAGPWD) were consulted on the barriers identified through the 2024 Defence Team Accessibility Survey. The consultation took place in person during the DAGPWD annual National Executive Meeting in March 2024.



### **Top themes of barriers that emerged from the DAGPWD consultation:**

- ✓ Attitudes
- ✓ Accommodations
- ✓ Self-identification
- ✓ Hiring and retention
- ✓ Accessible office environments and Bases and Wings

A separate consultation was subsequently undertaken with the DAGPWD to ensure that barriers and commitments outlined in the enclosed corrective plan aligned with feedback that was received during the initial consultation period.

To ensure that an intersectional perspective was included, consultation with co-chairs of the other Defence Advisory Groups (DAGs) – the Defence Indigenous Advisory Group, the Defence Visible Minority Advisory Group, the Defence Women’s Advisory Organization, and the Defence Team Pride Advisory Organization – was also undertaken.

## **Defence Team L3 Accessibility Working Group**

To support a further coordinated and integrated approach to accessibility within the Defence Team, a director-level (L3) accessibility working group was established in January 2024. The working group brings together key stakeholders from across the Defence Team and provides a forum to discuss matters of mutual interest as they relate to and intersect with accessibility. The working group also provides an opportunity for accessibility stakeholders to coordinate and leverage efforts across the Defence Team and, where possible, to ensure alignment.

The working group plays a key role in ensuring sustained attention to the requirements and implementation of the *ACA* in the Defence Team. To build on the momentum of the past year following the publishing of the 2023 Defence Team Accessibility Plan Progress Report, the working group has been meeting on a bi-weekly basis since its establishment in January 2024 and has remained focused on the following objectives:

- Discussing and identifying known and potential barriers to accessibility and corresponding actions.
- Discussing supporting activities to remove barriers to accessibility.
- Discussing an approach to an Accessibility performance measurement strategy
- Raising known accessibility concerns and communicating linkages with other discussions and/or initiatives related to accessibility.

The barriers that were identified through consultation on the 2023 Progress report, the 2024 Defence Team Accessibility Survey and the 2024 consultation with the DAGPWD were presented to the working group. From that information, each priority area lead was tasked to identify proposed actions that would address the barriers in their respective lines of efforts as well as identify performance indicators.

## Government of Canada Best Practices in Accessibility

As part of its commitment to accessibility and continuous learning, the Defence Team Accessibility Office in Chief Professional Conduct and Culture and functional authority of the accessibility program, has leveraged advice from experts and leaders across the Government of Canada in the accessibility space.

Consulted organizations include, but are not limited to, the Office for Public Service Accessibility (OPSA), the Interdepartmental Accessibility Community of Practice co-chaired by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), the Office of the Deputy Minister Champion for Persons with Disabilities, the Accessibility Directorate at ESDC, and the Accessible Procurement Resource Centre at PSPC.

Each engagement with these organizations provided an opportunity for the Defence Team to share and acquire best practices and lessons learned, supporting a shared vision of a barrier-free and accessible workplace.

## Our plan: priority areas, desired results and activities

The 2022 Corrective Defence Team Accessibility Plan communicates the Defence Teams' commitments and activities in support of removing accessibility barriers identified through consultations with persons with disabilities. As this is only a 1-year plan, the approach has been to focus on identifying commitments and activities that are realistic to undertake or get started this 2024 calendar year, a short period of time, as well as with the resources and funding available. Priority has also been placed on activities that can address multiple barriers or barriers that we have heard are impacting the most people. Please refer to Annex A for a complete list of barriers by priority area.

### The 2022 Corrective Accessibility Plan at a glance:

- ✓ 8 priority areas
- ✓ 18 desired results
- ✓ 27 activities that will help achieve the desired results
- ✓ 30 indicators

## 1. Culture

The Culture priority area is led by the Defence Team Accessibility Office in Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC). The main focus of efforts in this area is on changing the workplace culture at the Defence Team to address the attitudinal barriers that exist and that prevent the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace.

The work undertaken to shift the current culture of accessibility will be foundational to the Defence Team being successful not only in the culture space moving forward but as well as with efforts under other priority areas. Culture transformation will allow the Defence Team to embrace and understand the importance of prioritizing and working towards a barrier-free workplace.

As a first step towards culture transformation, the activities identified for the remainder of the calendar year and that are outlined below focus on awareness and learning about accessibility and disability inclusion. These activities will help build and enable people to adopt a “yes by default” approach to accessibility and will also support accessibility being proactively and systematically built into processes from the start.

In addition to the activities outlined below and in advance of the more complex work that remains to be done in the overarching barrier removal space, the Defence Team will continue to implement and leverage the Defence Team Culture Evolution Strategy. The strategy aims to align, inform, coordinate, and enable culture evolution efforts across the organization, providing an opportunity to ensure that accessibility needs and considerations are fully and proactively integrated into all levels of the organization.

### Barriers identified through consultation

- Experiences of stigma, exclusion, bullying and intimidation.
- Negative beliefs, assumptions and comments about neurodivergent people.
- Derogatory terms used to refer to people with disabilities.
- Negative attitudes towards and treatment of people with disabilities in the CAF.
- Experiences of stigma and exclusion of CAF members with disabilities, especially those with cognitive and learning disabilities, and being seen as unfit to serve.
- CAF Members with disabilities are harassed for being non-deployable.
- A shift back to social activities and team building being exclusively in-person without a digital alternative.

### Desired result:

**Greater awareness of and learning opportunities about persons with disabilities, accessibility and barriers.**

### Activities

#### Activity 1.1.

**Develop and deliver annual programming and communications for National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support:** Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs – ADM(PA)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Programming is delivered (yes/no)
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative Dataset

### Activity 1.2.

**Develop and implement a communications strategy for the Defence Team Accessibility Plan, as well as products to raise awareness of accessibility and disability inclusion.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support:** Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs – ADM(PA)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Accessibility Communications Plan is developed
- ✓ **Data Source:** Completed yes or no

### Activity 1.3.

**Develop and implement an accessibility awareness campaign.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support:** Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs – ADM(PA)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of awareness campaign presentation and products
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

## 2. Employment

The Employment priority area is co-led by the Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources-Civilian – ADM(HR-Civ) for public service employees and Chief Military Personnel (CMP) for CAF members. An additional supporting organization is the CAF Employment Equity team within Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC) who works closely with CMP on matters related to CAF employment.

In alignment with the evolution of the CAF's roles, operations and culture, this plan marks the first occasion that CAF employment accessibility barriers and commitments are being defined through the reporting process. This shift recognizes the Universality of Service as a foundational principle of the CAF while responding to the Defence Team's prior commitments to review and clarify points of overlap with Universality of Service and the *Accessible Canada Act* to ensure a balanced and consistent application.

Focus on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in the employment space is fundamental to the experiences of persons with disabilities, who remain underrepresented in the public service workforce and CAF. The commitments and activities outlined below will help ensure that employees and CAF members have access to safe, respectful, supportive and nondiscriminatory workplaces and work opportunities.

## Workforce: Department of National Defence (DND) Public Service Workforce

The Department of National Defence (DND) is committed to investing in and supporting its workforce, a commitment underscored with the release of [Canada's Defence Policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged \(SSE\)](#).

The DND Public Service Workforce is just over 31,000 strong, employed at Ottawa Headquarters and on Bases and Wings across Canada in each province and territory, with the exception for Nunavut, and overseas. Public Service employees are employed in diverse environments from kitchens to cubicles to shop floors.

- DND Public Service Workforce: 31 109
- 41% work in the National Capital Region, while 59% work in the regions.
- Workforce Representation:
  - Women: 43%
  - Members of Visible Minorities: 11%
  - Persons with Disabilities: 5%
  - Indigenous Peoples: 3%
- Top Classification Groups:
  - Administrative Services (AS): 61%
  - Clerical and Regulatory (CR): 10%
  - Information Technology (IT), General Labour and Trades (GL), and General Services (GS): 8%

### Barriers identified through consultation

- Stigma and exclusion identified in career advancement and promotion opportunities.
- Self-identifying as a person with a disability in hiring pools and losing out on employment opportunities.
- No proactive technical assistance offered or provided during onboarding process to employees who self-identify with a disability and requiring additional assistance.
- Gap in considerations for the intersection of disability and recruitment of Indigenous applicants.
- The accommodations process was identified as a barrier.
- Managers not being approachable regarding accommodation requests or discussions about accessibility, especially pertaining to discussions about mental health.
- The spirit and intent of the Government of Canada Accessibility Passport is not honoured in accommodations processes.

- Government of Canada Accessibility Passport solutions are not supported, despite it being followed by previous employers.
- Long wait times to receive response and support from the Office of Disability Management (ODM).
- The return to the office presents barriers for many persons with disabilities.

## Desired results (DND Public Service Workforce)

**Human resources' practices for civilians are accessible and inclusive so that persons with disabilities are supported.**

**There is an increase in the recruitment, retention and promotion of persons with disabilities.**

**Employees have timely access to workplace accommodations.**

## Activities (DND Public Service Workforce)

### Activity 2.1.

**Set and report on annual hiring, inclusion, and promotion goals for EE groups, including persons with disabilities.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources – Civilian – ADM(HR-Civ)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Chief Professional Conduct and Culture, All L1s
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** FY 2025-26, ongoing thereafter
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 1:** Hiring and promotion rates
- ✓ **Data Source 1:** National staffing dataset
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 2:** Inclusion rating
- ✓ **Data Source 2:** CPCC inclusion dataset

### Activity 2.2.

**Conduct Intersectional and accessibility reviews of key employment systems to identify, eliminate, mitigate barriers (target areas: accommodations, grievances, official languages training, orientation, performance & talent management).**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources – Civilian – ADM(HR-Civ)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** 2024-27
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 1:** Completion of ADM (HR-Civ) Implementation Plan
- ✓ **Data Source 1:** Reporting to EEDI Subcommittee within ADM(HR-CIV)
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 2:** Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) Results for related questions (disaggregated by L1/EE group)
- ✓ **Data Source 2:** PSES

### Activity 2.3.

#### Lead the implementation of the Accessibility Passport.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources – Civilian – ADM(HR-Civ)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** All L1s
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** FY 2024-25, sustainment thereafter
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Volume of passport-related questions to HR-CIV
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

### Workforce: Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)

The CAF takes extraordinary measures to retain and develop its valued members wherever possible. The CAF continuously reviews its military personnel policies and programs to retain an operational, diverse, dedicated CAF membership, imbued with an ethical Profession of Arms culture. The CAF is committed to giving all members time and support to continue to fully contribute to the CAF and realize a productive and satisfying career of military service.

#### Barriers identified through consultation

- There is no CAF-specific solution to the GOC Accessibility Passport.
- Ableism creates stigma around and discrimination against CAF members with disabilities.
- CAF members with disabilities are harassed at times for non-deployment.
- Negative attitudes towards and treatment of people with disabilities in the CAF.
- Differences between CAF and civilian public service privacy of personal information policies are not well understood.
- No DAOD that outlines the operational requirements of the institution in determining the limits of any accommodation.

Note: The barriers identified under Employment priority area for the CAF are not attributable to one single CAF environment (i.e. Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Air Force and the Canada Special Operations Forces Command) and may not be representative across all environments.

#### Desired results (CAF)

**Military Personnel practices for the Canadian Armed Forces are accessible and inclusive so that CAF members are supported and can contribute to the organization.**

**The operational requirements of the institution in determining the limits of any accommodation are better outlined and aligned with the evolution of the CAF's roles and operations and consider developments in Canadian Human Rights laws and policies.**

## Activities (CAF)

### Activity 2.4.

**Chief Professional Conduct and Culture will enable self-identification in order to set and report on representation for EE designated groups, including persons with disabilities.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** CAF Employment Equity, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Chief of Military Personnel (CMP)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2025
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Goals established for persons with disabilities EE designated group and reported alongside other EE designated groups.
- ✓ **Data Source:** Canadian Forces Employment Equity Database

### Activity 2.5.

**Conduct reviews of new CAF policies, programs, and systems to ensure removal of accessibility barriers, as possible, per the *Accessible Canada Act*.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** CAF Employment Equity, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Chief of Military Personnel (CMP)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Ongoing – will be reported annually
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Completion of accessibility checklist
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

### Activity 2.6.

**Conduct reviews of the Universality of Service policy and standards to better align and respond to the evolution of the CAF's roles and operations, while considering developments in Canadian Human Rights law (i.e., the *Accessible Canada Act*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *Employment Equity Act*, etc.)**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Chief of Military Personnel (CMP)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Ongoing
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** A critical path and review schedule of U of S principle is established and agreed to by October 2024
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative Dataset

### Activity 2.7.

**Continued review of aptitude test to better align operational requirements and the limits of accommodation with the ACA and EE Act.**



- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Chief of Military Personnel (CMP)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Environmental Commands
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Ongoing – will be reported annually
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of additional applicants processed past the aptitude test
- ✓ **Data Source:** Canadian Forces Recruiting Information Management System (CFRIMS)

### 3. Built Environment

The Built Environment priority area is led by the Assistant Deputy Minister, Infrastructure and Environment – ADM(IE).

Feedback from persons with disabilities has underscored the need to continue to focus efforts in this priority area since the built environment of Defence Team buildings, offices, facilities and workplaces poses day-to-day barriers that limit the full participation at work. In response, the Defence Team commits to continuing to proactively consider and address accessibility requirements to ensure that the Defence Team’s built environment is proactively accessible by design.

#### Barriers as identified through consultation

- Buildings lack clear and accessible labelling and signage.
- The inaccessibility of stairs is compounded by a lack of elevators, ramps, and stairs lacking railings.
- Having to navigate long corridors, navigate confusing spaces and not being able to access parts of buildings.
- Non-automated doors were noted as a barrier to mobility.
- Insufficient or a complete lack of accessible washrooms was identified as a barrier.
- Lighting and, specifically, the inability to control lighting was identified as a barrier.
- Ergonomic issues, including uncomfortable furniture that increases pain and discomfort levels and does not allow participants to sit comfortably at their desk or in flex spaces was identified as a barrier.
- Recreational spaces, including break rooms, gyms, and pools were identified as not being accessible.
- Built environment of Bases and Wings is not accessible by design.
- Assistive technology, such as elevators, are often disabled on Bases and Wings.
- Common spaces on Bases and Wings are not designed with accessibility needs in mind.
- The number of accessible housing units on Bases and Wings is limited.
- Cost of accessible housing to members is greater.

## Desired result

The Defence Team's built environment is enhanced and employees, members, clients and visitors have access to barrier-free federally owned and leased buildings, offices, facilities and workplaces, including military Bases and Wings.

## Activities

### Activity 3.1.

**Assess and improve the accessibility of the built environment within DND/CAF by conducting accessibility audits and assessing the results.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Infrastructure and Environment – ADM(IE)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Timelines for specific studies and projects will be identified during assessment phase.
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of buildings audited
- ✓ **Data Source:** Consultant reports, IE Reporting and Integration System (IERIS)

### Activity 3.2.

**Continue to improve and develop documents related to accessibility in the built environment by:**

- **(1) Continuing to ensure any new contracts involving the built environment have considered requirements for accessibility; and**
  - **(2) Transitioning the current policy instruments related to accessibility to the new format (CETO, policy, directive, standard, guidelines).**
- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Infrastructure and Environment – ADM(IE)
  - ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
  - ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** The new Standard on Accessible and Inclusive Design (SAID) is forecasted to be published by Q2 2024.
  - ✓ **Performance Indicator 1:** Number of reported or recorded cases contract have not considered accessibility requirements, without cause or an approved minor variance.
  - ✓ **Data Source 1:** Project information, Administrative dataset
  - ✓ **Performance Indicator 2:** The CETO is converted into a DAES Standard on Accessible and Inclusive Design. The DAES Standard is issued for use, or not. Binary.
  - ✓ **Data Source 2:** ES Policy Instrument Suite and published technical bulletins.

## 4. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services priority area is led by the Defence Team Accessibility Office in Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC).

Through consultation with persons with disabilities, it has been emphasized that many of the current programs, services, policies and processes place the burden on individuals with disabilities to identify solutions rather than a proactive application of accessibility considerations by service providers. Key to removing this barrier and creating a barrier-free Defence Team will be ensuring that, moving forward, all programs, services, policies and processes are accessible by design and considered from the start. In addition, the feedback process will be critical to provide ways for barriers to be identified so that service providers can implement lasting solutions that remove and prevent further barriers.

### Barriers identified through consultation

- Many of the current policies place the burden on individuals with disabilities to identify solutions rather than a proactive application of accessibility considerations by service providers.
- CAF medical services and gatekeeping in terms of testing of ADHD, neurodivergence, and mental illness identified as a barrier.
- Official language requirements and expectations for employees with disabilities is not accessible.

### Desired results

**The Defence Team is equipped to design and deliver programs, services, policies and processes that are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities.**

**Accessibility is proactively and systematically built into programs, services, policies and processes from the start.**

### Activities

#### Activity 4.1.

**Make it easier for persons with disabilities to provide accessibility-related feedback on programs and services without having to submit a formal complaint.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** All L1s
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Implementation of Formal Feedback Process
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

### Activity 4.2.

**Strengthen the role of the Defence Team Accessibility Office for Accessible Client Service. This team will offer guidance on making services more accessible.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of consultations
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

### Activity 4.3.

**Add an accessibility and intersectional checklist to the suite of tools used to perform analysis. This will ensure the lived experiences and needs of persons with disabilities are considered in policy and program development.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Chief of Military Personnel (CMP), All L1s
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Completion of Accessibility Checklist
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

## 5. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) priority area is led by the Chief Information Office Group (CIOG).

ICT refers to the available software and hardware that support accessibility goals and enables employees with disabilities to perform at their best. This priority area plays a crucial role in addressing the members' ICT accommodation requests. The activities outlined below focus on setting the foundation to providing reliable and timely services by establishing visibility of services with the aim to also develop service standards to ensure timely delivery.

Moving forward, the Chief Information Officer Group plans to also focus and prioritize proactive accessibility measures in the design, maintenance and evolution of ICT. Examples include: improving legacy systems to introduce the standard accessibility features; introducing new enterprise applications with accessibility features activated, where possible; and including common accessibility features in new project statement requirements.

### Barriers identified through consultation

- Inconsistent approval of requests to use certain information communication technologies.

- Long wait times to obtain information communication technologies.
- Not recognizing valid ergonomic reports from previous departments and having to redo assessments for DND causing further delays.
- Computer paraphernalia to support accessibility not proactively provided (e.g., headset, keyboard, monitors)
- Ergonomic needs not proactively considered resulting in multiple ergonomic requests by persons with disabilities.
- Lack of ergonomic equipment for working in a hybrid environment (having to choose which setup to be ergonomic and/or forces to travel with ergonomic devices).
- The Bluetooth ban on the DWAN impacts many assistive technologies.
- Requests for items such as external mics rejected when entered into Assyst even when there is accommodations rationale provided.
- DLN has numerous outdated courses where the text is difficult to read with dyslexia, the problems carried over from DLN 2.0
- MS Teams closed captioning is not reliable and only works in one official language at a time.
- Applications are not accessible by design (for example, Power BI and Adobe Acrobat).

## Desired result

**Employees and CAF members with disabilities have barrier-free and timely access to tools and technologies to help them succeed in their work.**

**Existing and new information and communication technologies (ICT) products, services and content are accessible for all users.**

## Activities

### Activity 5.1.

**Develop a tracking process using the Enterprise Information Technology Service Management (EITSM) tool for all user ICT accommodation demands.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Chief Information Office Group (CIOG)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Civilian)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Whether process has been developed, documented, approved by DGUIT and is ready to be implemented in EITSM (yes/no).
- ✓ **Data Source:** EISTM

### Activity 5.2.

**Track all user ICT accommodation demands through EITSM and provide monthly report.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Chief Information Office Group (CIOG)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Civilian)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** March 2025
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Whether the process has been implemented within EITSM and demands are tracked (yes/no).
- ✓ **Data Source:** EISTM

### Activity 5.3.

**Establish and maintain an on-line catalogue of already approved and pertinent hardware and software solutions.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Chief Information Office Group (CIOG)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Civilian)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Whether process is documented, has been approved by DGUIT, is established and maintained as well as being available via EITSM and the Defence Intranet (yes/no).
- ✓ **Data Source:** EITSM and Defence Intranet

### Activity 5.4.

**Adopt a Common and Standardized Approach. Develop and implement a common and standard approach to deliver AAAC services to the DT members:**

- **Leverage procuring solution in conjunction with Shared Services AAAC programme.**
  - **Establish and maintain an on-line catalogue of approved and pertinent software and hardware solutions to speed demand fulfillment via a reuse strategy.**
  - **When a member, who has an approved accommodation solution, is deployed, from another Department or Agency to DND-CAF, consider reusing solution(s) as it was implemented in their former organization.**
- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Chief Information Office Group (CIOG)
  - ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Civilian)
  - ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
  - ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Whether process is documented with DGUIT sign-off (yes/no).

## 6. Communication (other than ICT)

The Communication priority area is led by Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Affairs – ADM(PA). Barrier-free communications and content are fundamental to creating an accessible-confident Defence Team as they are at the center of our day-to-day experiences in the workplace.

The development and distribution of accessible communications responsibility of all employees and CAF members. To ensure that individuals are equipped to respond to this need, the activities below are focused on providing clear and consistent direction on the development and application of barrier-free communication products and activities.

### Barriers identified through consultation

- Products are often not written in plain language.
- Formatting of military documents inherently inaccessible (for example, use of all caps in CANFORGENS) and do not follow GC accessible guidelines.
- Consistent use and reliance on jargon and acronyms.
- Lack of availability of documentation in alternative formats (digital or hardcopy, for example).
- Often only single channels of communications are made available with no alternatives (for example, email-only or telephone-only communication).

### Desired results

**Communications are accessible and written in plain language.**

**Employees, CAF members and clients have barrier-free access to all communication products.**

**Employees and CAF members are knowledgeable of accessibility considerations as they relate to communication products.**

### Activities

#### Activity 6.1.

**Provide accessible content produced and disseminated by ADM(PA) to the Defence Team.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Affairs – ADM(PA)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Ongoing
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of accessibility complaints related to accessible content

- ✓ **Data Source:** Accessibility Feedback Form and process

### Activity 6.2.

**Ensure external communications produced and disseminated by ADM(PA) are compliant with regulated accessibility requirements.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Affairs – ADM(PA)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Ongoing
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of accessibility complaints related to accessible content
- ✓ **Data Source:** Accessibility Feedback Form and process

### Activity 6.3.

**Promote and encourage the accessible communications standards to Defence Team members for internal and external dissemination that comply with the [Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible](#).**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Affairs – ADM(PA)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** All L1s
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Ongoing
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** L1s are versed and apply the policy leveraging available tools and other resources.
- ✓ **Data Source:** Accessibility Feedback Form and process

## 7. Transportation

Transportation remains a complex area for the Defence Team to address due to its international footprint and the many Base and Wing Commands across Canada. While commitments have been made to remove barriers to transportation, they focus prominently on Carling Campus in the National Capital Region. It is recognized that work remains to be done to ensure that employees, CAF members, clients and visitors have access to accessible parking and transportation at all Defence Team buildings and sites.

### Barriers identified through consultation

- Parking:
  - There are not enough accessible parking spaces in relation to the demand.
  - Lack of clarity about the process of acquiring parking permits.



- The accessible parking accommodation process is confusing, requests can go unfulfilled and parking lot contractors can be unresponsive.
- There are no parking spaces for persons with temporary disabilities.
- There are very few accessible parking spaces on Bases and Wings.
- Often accessible parking spaces are blocked by construction, rendering them inaccessible.
- Parking is assigned by rank and not by accessibility requirements.
- Onus falls to the employee to make their own arrangements for parking accommodations, which is the employer's responsibility.
- Shuttles:
  - A lack of communication about where and when shuttles were arriving was identified as an issue.
  - An overall lack of shuttles was identified, both for regular use, as well as a lack of shuttles available for medical runs specifically.
  - CAF members expressed that use of the shuttle bus access was limited in part by one's rank.
  - Several inaccessible features of the shuttle service were identified:
    - The distance between the drop off point and the destination building;
    - The need to use stairs and broken elevators and doors that are difficult to open; and
    - Embarking and disembarking the shuttle bus itself was also identified as a barrier.
  - There is no lift on vehicles used on Bases and Wings.

## Desired results

**Employees and CAF members have increasingly barrier-free access to parking.**

## Activities

### Activity 7.1.

**Ensure process to obtain parking behind the gates at Carling Campus is up to date and posted accessibly for employees, CAF members, clients and visitors. adequate accessible parking is available to employees with physical/mobility disabilities as required.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** CFSG (O-G), Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of visitors to site where process is posted
- ✓ **Data Source:** Web Analytics Report

## Activity 7.2.

**Run a pilot at Carling Campus to determine how to address barriers in the transportation footprint with a view to expanding the pilot across Canada to all Bases and Wings.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** All L1s
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of parking related complaints received through Defence Team Accessibility Feedback process.
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

## 8. Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities is led by Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel – ADM(Mat).

Accessibility in procurement is about ensuring that the goods and services we buy are accessible to a broad range of end-users by including accessibility criteria in requirements (when appropriate); providing a barrier-free procurement process for the public via access to information and tendering opportunities; and enabling diverse suppliers, including businesses owned or led by persons with disabilities, to participate in procurement processes. Accessible procurement is a shared responsibility between contracting authorities as well as business owners.

Procurement activities for DND and the CAF are complex due to the volume and scope of requests. Despite the complexity, there is an acknowledgement that it can be done more accessibly. Due to its large procurement footprint, there is an opportunity for the Defence Team to position itself to be part of the Government of Canada-wide solution moving forward.

### Barriers identified through consultation

- There is currently no standing offer for braille.
- Procurement does not have accessibility built into the process.
- Cost and lack of available funds are often identified as a reason to not being able to procure necessary services and products to make environment and experiences more accessible.

### Desired results

**Accessibility requirements are considered when buying goods, services, facilities and products.**

**Accessibility considerations in procurement communicated to employees of DND and members of the CAF with procurement responsibilities.**

**Content for accessibility considerations in statement of works communicated to employees of DND and members of the CAF.**

## Activities

### Activity 8.1.

**Review the Statement of Work (SOW) standard, D-01-002-009/SG-001. Content related to accessibility will be reviewed and updated as required.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel – ADM(Mat)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** September 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Updated SOW published
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

### Activity 8.2.

**Review and update the Procurement Administration Manual (PAM) Chapter 1.10.2 on Accessible Procurement, including the Accessible Procurement SharePoint page referenced within.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel – ADM(Mat)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** March 2028
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 1:** The updated guidance in PAM 1.10.2 has been published on the Mat intranet site.
- ✓ **Data Source 1:** Administrative dataset
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 2:** Percentage of Procurement files per FY audited by the DSCO Contracting compliance review team (CCRT) that contain a completed Accessibility considerations form signed by the Technical authority.
- ✓ **Data Source 2:** Audit results from the DSCO Contracting Compliance review team (CCRT).

### Activity 8.3.

**Develop content on accessibility requirements for a new section on Technical Support for Procurement Management and Social Procurement for Part 8 of the Technical Support Guide.**

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel – ADM(Mat)

- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2025
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 1:** Instructions on Accessible considerations has been published in the Technical Support Guide.
- ✓ **Data Source 1:** Administrative Dataset
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 2:** Percentage of Procurement files per FY audited by the DSCO Contracting compliance review team (CCRT) that contain a completed Accessibility considerations form signed by the Technical authority.
- ✓ **Data Source 2:** Audit results from the DSCO Contracting Compliance review team (CCRT).

## Accountability and Governance

The way accessibility fits into the existing Defence Team governance structure is being considered to ensure that senior leadership is best positioned in enabling accountability, stewardship and transparency on accessibility.

The Representation and Inclusion Sub-Committee was re-established to provide a forum for accessibility-related issues to be discussed at the executive level. This forum is and will continue to be key to ensuring that executives are made aware of barriers identified and that solutions receive the approvals and traction that will allow service providers to take the necessary actions to remove the barriers.

The director-level (L3) Accessibility Working Group also plays an important role in shaping accessibility at the Defence Team. Although representatives are not personally accountable for the delivery of commitments made in plans and progress reports, representatives are key stewards in ensuring their respective senior leadership and chains of command are up to date on accessibility requirements and initiatives.

## Monitoring and reporting

### Performance Measurement

The Defence Team Accessibility Office in Chief Professional Conduct and Culture and functional authority of the accessibility program is currently developing an accessibility performance measurement strategy, a gap in the initial 2022 Accessibility Plan and 2023 Progress Report.

Development of the strategy involves leveraging best practices from across the Government of Canada enterprise through the Interdepartmental Accessibility Community of Practice and through direct engagement with OPSA, as well as drawing on the [Results Framework for the Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#). The performance measurement strategy will be key in establishing the Defence Team as accessibility-confident as it will provide the necessary results to support evidence-based decision making, accountability and continuous improvement.

To demonstrate the Defence Team's commitment towards measurement, the enclosed plan highlights accessibility performance indicators under each of the priority areas. Emphasis has been placed on the quality of indicators versus the quantity in support of developing a strategy that focuses on a longitudinal approach to measurement that will benefit the Defence Team accessibility program long term.

## Plan Implementation

The Defence Team Accessibility Office will continue to engage with persons with disabilities, stakeholders and governance committees to identify and implement strategies to support the removal of barriers for people with disabilities through the commitments made in this plan. Given the time between the publishing of the enclosed plan and publishing of the 2024 progress report, an internal communications strategy will be key to enable organizations across the Defence Team to undertake the necessary work. A key communication piece will be a DM/CDS joint message to all Defence Team members urging them to improve their individual and collective understanding of accessibility and disability.

The Defence Team Accessibility Office will be responsible for monitoring progress against the 2022 Corrective Accessibility Plan and raising progress with senior leadership through its chain of command and various governance forums to ensure accountability of results.

In accordance with the *Accessible Canada Act* and Regulations, the Defence Team will continue to publish an updated accessibility plan every 3 years with Progress Reports every year in between. The Defence Team is committed to reporting on the progress made against the enclosed plan in its 2024 progress report, which will also highlight the feedback received against the plan and newly identified barriers.

## The Way Forward: A Call to Action

The 2022 Defence Team Corrective Accessibility Plan outlines the ways in which the Defence Team will continue to identify and prevent new barriers as well as the concrete actions for the year ahead to remove known barriers.

The plan represents the Defence Team's renewed commitment and is a call to action. Building a more accessible and disability inclusive workplace is not only the right thing to do but is also essential to the success of the Defence Team as a whole. Successful implementation of the plan will take a concerted effort from all members of the Defence Team at all levels of the organization.

Although there are many commitments highlighted in this plan that will help move the Defence Team forward in meeting its accessibility commitments, there is recognition that there is still a long way to go in creating a Defence Team workplace that is fully inclusive and accessible.

Creating a barrier-free workplace will be a long-term process that will require dedicated, deliberate and sustained action over time. Part of this commitment will involve remaining adaptable and approaching learning with openness and genuine curiosity,

allowing the Defence Team to continue to evolve and create the necessary conditions that will allow all employees and members to maximize their contribution and achieve their full potential.

# Annex A – Identified Barriers by Priority Area

## Culture

- Experiences of stigma, exclusion, bullying and intimidation.
- Negative beliefs, assumptions and comments about neurodivergent people.
- Derogatory terms used to refer to people with disabilities.
- Negative attitudes towards and treatment of people with disabilities in the CAF.
- Application of the universality of service principle creates stigma around and discrimination against CAF members with disabilities.
- Experiences of stigma and exclusion of CAF members with disabilities, especially those with cognitive and learning disabilities, and being seen as unfit to serve.
- CAF Members with disabilities are harassed for being non-deployable.
- A shift back to social activities and team building being exclusively in-person without a digital alternative.

## Employment (Civilian)

- Stigma and exclusion in career advancement and promotion:
  - Avoidance of self-identifying as a person with a disability or disabilities to managers out of the concern of being viewed as less competent and be looked over for career advancement opportunities.
  - Frustration of not being granted career growth opportunities due to identifying as a person with a disability.
  - Work not being tasked after raising accommodation needs.
  - Fear that performance evaluations may be impacted by their accommodation needs.
  - Accommodations not being considered during performance evaluations.
  - Feeling of having to work harder than peers without disabilities to prove their worth as employees.
  - Defence Team members with disabilities are not promoted as rapidly.
- Self-identifying as a person with a disability in hiring pools and losing out on employment opportunities.
- No proactive technical assistance offered or provided during onboarding process to employees who self-identify with a disability and requiring additional assistance.
- Gap in considerations for the intersection of disability and recruitment of Indigenous applicants.
- The accommodations process was identified as a barrier.
  - Being forced to interact with the medical system to receive accommodations was identified as a barrier.
  - Fear of speaking with managers about accommodation needs due to attitudinal reasons and fear of confidentiality being breached.
  - Labour Relations consistently brought into accommodations process and frames conversation that persons with disabilities are a workplace issue.

- Lack of clear timelines and expectations for the accommodations process.
- Lack of resources available on how to request accommodations and steps of the accommodations process.
- The accommodation process was not made clear during hiring process.
- Difficulty carrying accommodations forward from previous departments.
- The mainstream culture remains that workplace accommodations are adjudicated by senior executives, causing personal information to be shared unnecessarily widely.
- Attitudes, especially those of managers and senior leadership, towards accommodation requests prevented people from wanting to recommend the Defence Team as an employer to their friends.
- Lack of subject matter expertise regarding accommodations in the assessment process.
- The return to the office presents barriers for many persons with disabilities.
  - The hybrid work model is not accessible.
  - Workplace shared hoteling stations do not consider the need for ergonomic setups and instead rely heavily on a one size fits all approach.
  - Workplace hoteling stations re-enforce an unaccommodated approach to working.
  - Appropriate accommodation of remote work needs to be granted with less stigma.
  - People with disabilities feel less safe in the physical office.
  - DND work arrangement processes are contradictory and need to be aligned.
- Managers not being approachable regarding accommodation requests or discussions about accessibility, especially pertaining to discussions about mental health.
- The spirit and intent of the Government of Canada Accessibility Passport is not honoured in accommodations process.
- Government of Canada Accessibility Passport solutions are not supported, despite it being followed by previous employers.
- Long wait times to receive response and support from the Office of Disability Management (ODM).

## Employment (CAF)

- There is no CAF-specific solution to the GOC Accessibility Passport.
- Ableism creates stigma around and discrimination against CAF members with disabilities.
- CAF members with disabilities are harassed at times for non-deployment.
- Negative attitudes towards and treatment of people with disabilities in the CAF.
- Differences between CAF and civilian public service privacy of personal information policies are not well understood.
- No DAOD that outlines the operational requirements of the institution in determining the limits of any accommodation.



## Built Environment

- Buildings lack clear and accessible labelling and signage.
- The inaccessibility of stairs is compounded by a lack of elevators, ramps, and stairs lacking railings.
- Having to navigate long corridors, navigate confusing spaces and not being able to access parts of buildings.
- Non-automated doors were noted as a barrier to mobility.
- Insufficient or a complete lack of accessible washrooms was identified as a barrier.
- Lighting and, specifically, the inability to control lighting was identified as a barrier.
- Ergonomic issues, including uncomfortable furniture that increases pain and discomfort levels and does not allow participants to sit comfortably at their desk or in flex spaces was identified as a barrier.
- Recreational spaces, including break rooms, gyms, and pools were identified as not being accessible.
- Built environment of Bases and Wings is not accessible by design.
- Assistive technology, such as elevators, are often disabled on bases.
- Common spaces on Bases and Wings are not designed with accessibility needs in mind.
- The number of accessible housing units on Bases and Wings is limited.
- Cost of accessible housing to members is greater.

## Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

- Many of the current policies place the burden on individuals with disabilities to identify solutions rather than a proactive application of accessibility considerations by service providers.
- CAF medical services and gatekeeping in terms of testing of ADHD, neurodivergence, and mental illness identified as a barrier.
- Official language requirements and expectations for employees with disabilities is not accessible.

## Information Communication Technologies (ICT)

- Inconsistent approval of requests to use certain information communication technologies.
- Long wait times to obtain information communication technologies.
- Not recognizing valid ergonomic reports from previous departments and having to redo assessments for DND causing further delays.
- Computer paraphernalia to support accessibility not proactively provided (e.g., headset, keyboard, monitors)
- Ergonomic needs not proactively considered resulting in multiple ergonomic requests by persons with disabilities.

- Lack of ergonomic equipment for working in a hybrid environment (having to choose which setup to be ergonomic and/or forces to travel with ergonomic devices).
- The Bluetooth ban on the DWAN impacts many assistive technologies.
- Requests for items such as external mics rejected when entered into Assyst even when there is accommodations rationale provided.
- DLN has numerous outdated courses where the text is difficult to read with dyslexia, the problems carried over from DLN 2.0
- MS Teams closed captioning is not reliable and only works in one official language at a time.
- Applications are not accessible by design (for example, Power BI and Adobe Acrobat).

## Communication (other than ICT)

- Products are often not written in plain language.
- Formatting of military documents inherently inaccessible (for example, use of all caps in CANFORGENS) and do not follow GC accessible guidelines.
- Consistent use and reliance on jargon and acronyms.
- Lack of availability of documentation in alternative formats (digital or hardcopy, for example).
- Often only single channels of communications are made available with no alternatives (for example, email-only or telephone-only communication).

## Transport

- Parking:
  - There are not enough accessible parking spaces in relation to the demand.
  - Lack of clarity about the process of acquiring parking permits.
  - The accessible parking accommodation process is confusing, requests can go unfulfilled and parking lot contractors can be unresponsive.
  - There are no parking spaces for persons with temporary disabilities.
  - There are very few accessible parking spaces on Bases and Wings.
  - Often accessible parking spaces are blocked by construction, rendering them inaccessible.
  - Parking is assigned by rank and not by accessibility requirements.
  - Onus falls to the employee to make their own arrangements for parking accommodations, which is the employer's responsibility.
- Shuttles:
  - A lack of communication about where and when shuttles were arriving was identified as an issue.
  - An overall lack of shuttles was identified, both for regular use, as well as a lack of shuttles available for medical runs specifically.
  - CAF members expressed that use of the shuttle bus access was limited in part by one's rank.

- Several inaccessible features of the shuttle service were identified:
  - The distance between the drop off point and the destination building;
  - The need to use stairs and broken elevators and doors that are difficult to open; and
  - Embarking and disembarking the shuttle bus itself was also identified as a barrier.
- There is no lift on vehicles used on Bases and Wings.

### **Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities**

- There is currently no standing offer for braille.
- Procurement does not have accessibility built into the process.
- Cost and lack of available funds are often identified as a reason to not being able to procure necessary services and products to make environment and experiences more accessible.

## Annex B – Glossary

### **accessibility**

The degree to which a product, service, program or environment can be accessed or used by all.

### **accommodation**

Any change in the work environment that allows a person with functional limitations to do their job. Accommodations can be temporary, periodic or long-term, including:

- adjusting the physical workspace
- adapting the equipment or tools
- working flexible hours or job-sharing
- moving the workspace
- working from home
- removing or changing some non-essential tasks for others
- time off for medical appointments

### **assistive or adaptive device/technology**

A device, system or equipment designed to help a person do a task. Examples include canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, hearing aids and personal emergency response systems. They can also be IT-related items such as screen-reading software.

### **barrier**

Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. Barriers can be physical, architectural, technological, attitudinal or based on information or communications. They can also be the result of a policy or practice. (Source: [Accessible Canada Act](#))

### **clients**

People, businesses or their representatives served by, or using services provided by a government department.

### **disability**

A disability is any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society. (Source: [Accessible Canada Act](#))

### **equity-seeking group**

A group of persons who are disadvantaged based on one or more prohibited grounds of discrimination within the meaning of the Canadian Human Rights Act. (Source: [Public Service Employment Act](#))

### **inclusion**

The act of including someone or something as part of a group. An inclusive workplace is fair, equitable, supportive, welcoming and respectful.

Inclusion values and leverages differences in identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, experiences and perspectives that support and reinforce Canada's evolving human rights framework. (Source: [Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion](#))

### **intersectionality**

The interconnected nature of various social aspects, such as sex, gender, age, race, ethnicity, Indigenous identity, economic status, immigrant status, sexual orientation, disability, and geography, as they apply to a given individual or group, viewed as impacting experiences of discrimination or disadvantage.

An intersectional accessibility lens is the analytical framework that starts with/centers experiences of people with (a) disability(ies).

### **nothing without us**

"Nothing without us" is one of the guiding principles of the [Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#). It means that persons with disabilities need to be fully and directly involved in the design of policies, plans, programs and services.

### **self-identification**

Providing employment equity information for statistical purposes. The federal public service uses this information to monitor the progress of employment equity groups and to report on workforce representation.

### **systemic barrier**

A systemic barrier is a pattern of behaviour in the policies and practices of an organization, which puts equity-seeking groups at a disadvantage.