

# Seniors banking annual report

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## Supporting our senior customers

January 2024



Seniors are an important part of our population. At this life stage, customers have different personal goals, and therefore different financial needs. We've summarized a few highlights of how we've supported this important client group over the past year, in line with the seven principles of the *Code of Conduct for the Delivery of Banking Services to Seniors*.

## 01 Policies and processes

We offer chequing accounts with no monthly fees for seniors. Among various existing process considerations, we also take extra care in our account management and collections processes, such as additional management review and approval before decisions are made on seniors' accounts. This Code of Conduct for seniors is also incorporated as part of our regulatory compliance management framework.

We continue to provide our employees with annual training and resources. This supports our employees in servicing senior customers and helps them identify and escalate suspected financial abuse and fraud of seniors. Training materials are reviewed periodically to ensure they remain fit for purpose. More details on training can be found under Principle 3.

To help further mitigate potential financial harm and to ensure employees are aware that seniors may require extra care and attention, we've included seniors in our procedures for Enhanced Care Needs customers. More details can be found under Principle 5.

## 02 Effective communication

We have guidelines in our Clear Language procedures on how to make communication better for seniors. Examples include guidelines on font type and size, as well as use of bullet points and white space.

Periodically, we send emails to our customers with fraud awareness tips and resources, informing them of scam trends and ways to protect themselves. We've taken extra care to send out reminder emails close to the holiday season, on topics such as online shopping fraud awareness.

We continue to offer a dedicated page in our public website for seniors [hsbc.ca/seniors](https://www.hsbc.ca/seniors). The page is easily accessible and contains consolidated information relevant to seniors, including the seniors banking guide [Know your banking](#), resources on fraud awareness and financial abuse, and information on powers of attorney and joint accounts.

## 03 Employee training

Our annual training on seniors banking includes important topics like scams / fraud awareness (e.g. phone scams), powers of attorney and joint accounts, escalation processes, communication tips, and digital banking guidance. This training is mandatory for all customer-facing personal and small business banking employees.

In 2023, 99% of our employees completed our seniors banking training. New employees are automatically assigned this training upon joining us and have 45 days to complete it. The remaining 1% included these new employees who were still within their 45-day completion period, as well as those who returned from leave. Completion of mandatory training is tied to our incentive framework.

The seniors training content is reviewed every two years by experts from various departments (such as Fraud, Branch Operations, etc.) to enhance and ensure accuracy.

Given the complexity of investments and wealth planning, it was especially important that we provide additional support to our Investment Counsellors so they can better assist clients who need extra care.

- In March 2023, we provided a refresher training to Investment Counsellors on completing the Potentially Vulnerable Customers (PVC) section of our Know Your Customer (KYC) information form.
- In May 2023, we conducted a training and issued a reminder communication to our Investment Counsellors regarding Enhanced Care Needs (ECN) customers, which includes seniors.

In light of the recent increase in fraud and scams, in addition to our usual mandatory training, in September 2023 we offered a fraud awareness webinar for our branch network. This training reinforced what to look out for in recent fraud trends, and how to help our customers become more aware.

## 04 Employee resources for servicing seniors

In addition to training and procedures, we provide employees with communication and servicing intranet resources. We also offer listening and reading devices in branches, a [Know your banking](#) guide for customers to take home and read, and a seniors banking page at [hsbc.ca/seniors](https://www.hsbc.ca/seniors).

In 2023, we updated the Potentially Vulnerable Customers (PVC) section of our KYC information form to improve how topics were organized, and to improve clarity. In July, we also issued a reminder to our customer-facing employees on the completion of this form and related procedures. The objective is to better identify and capture the information of customers who are PVCs, including seniors.

Internally, we have a support team that can answer employee questions on our procedures and best practices for servicing senior customers. Mandatory trainings are launched on a regular basis to refresh knowledge on this important topic. Besides our seniors banking training, our training on Enhanced Care Needs customers also mentions age-related vulnerabilities, which reinforces extra attention and care our senior customers may need.

Our seniors champion is Aditya Chakravarty, VP & Head of Propositions and Client Experience, and Natasha Renaud, Head of Customer Experience & Relations, is our designated officer on this Code of Conduct.

## **05 Mitigate potential financial harm**

We include considerations for seniors in our fraud detection and transaction monitoring processes. Other measures include guidance on offering private branch space for discussions.

To help further mitigate potential financial harm, we've included seniors in our procedures for Enhanced Care Needs customers, which also includes potentially vulnerable customers. Although we recognize not all seniors are vulnerable, we wanted to ensure employees are aware that seniors may require extra care and attention specific to their needs.

Other ongoing initiatives include fraud training for employees and regular email reminders for customers. This year, we sent 10 communications to our customers on fraud and scam awareness and offered a fraud awareness webinar for our branch employees.

## **06 Branch closures**

A decision to close a branch is never made lightly. We especially recognize that the branch is an important channel for our senior customers, and when we need to close one, we want to ensure we've considered our seniors' needs. In view of this, our branch closure procedures include the following:

- ♦ Take into account market demographics when closing a branch, and take steps to support senior customers if needed (e.g. proactive calls to customers)
- ♦ Write and format notification letters and in-branch notices in clear, simple language
- ♦ Provide seniors and their support persons with contact details for additional information and assistance regarding banking options

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- ♦ Hold accessible in-person and/or virtual information sessions
- ♦ Ensure any public consultations held are appropriate for the members of the affected community, including seniors
- ♦ Conduct a risk assessment with our Regulatory Compliance team to review the conditions of the branch closure

Information on different ways to bank with us is provided on our seniors banking page ([hsbc.ca/seniors](https://www.hsbc.ca/seniors)).

## 07 Annual report

This report is available on our seniors banking page ([hsbc.ca/seniors](https://www.hsbc.ca/seniors)) and at branches upon request