



Legacy Family Member Participation in Family Council

Family Councils recognize the important contributions of legacy family members, those whose loved ones have passed while in care. Their support their continued involvement in a manner that aligns with the Council's purpose, values, and needs.

Our 15 regional representatives at the Independent Long-Term Care Councils Association of BC were unanimous in agreement that decisions regarding legacy membership should rest with the Family Council itself, reflecting its independence and commitment to self-governance.

This perspective is reinforced by Family Councils Ontario, which maintains that membership in a Family Council does not automatically end upon the death of a resident. Instead, the inclusion of "legacy families" is supported and governed by each Council's own Terms of Reference. The Ministry of Health too, shares this vision.

Role and Status

Legacy family members may continue to participate in the Council, serving as part of leadership, or as an advisor, mentor, members emeritus, or in another role defined by the Council. They may contribute meaningfully through:

- Mentorship of new family members
- Sharing lived experience and historical context
- Supporting continuity of initiatives and advocacy efforts
- Providing guidance in collaborative engagement with care home teams

Value of Legacy Participation

The inclusion of legacy members is recognized as beneficial to both individuals and the Council as a whole:

- **Continuity and Knowledge Retention:** Legacy members carry valuable insight into past practices, challenges, and progress, strengthening the Council's effectiveness.
- **Mentorship and Leadership Development:** Their experience supports the growth and confidence of new members and emerging leaders.
- **Community and Grief Support:** Continued involvement offers a supportive environment for individuals navigating grief, while preserving meaningful relationships formed during their loved one's time in care.



- **Strengthened Advocacy:** Their informed perspective enhances the Council's collective voice in promoting quality of life for residents.

ILTCCABC emphasizes that these contributions are not only beneficial but essential to sustaining strong, informed, and compassionate Family Councils.

Council Autonomy and Governance

Family Councils are autonomous, self-led bodies. As such:

- The decision to include or retain a legacy member rest solely with the Family Council
- Councils may formally define legacy membership within their Terms of Reference
- Care home licensees, operators, or staff do not have the authority to prevent a legacy member's participation where the Council permits it

This autonomy ensures that councils remain grounded in the voices and experiences of families, past and present.

Council Discretion and Alignment

The inclusion of legacy members should be guided by:

- The current needs and priorities of the Council
- The individual's ability to contribute constructively and respectfully
- Alignment with the Council's Code of Conduct and values

Legacy members are expected to uphold the same standards as all Council participants.

Terms of Reference

Family Councils are encouraged to include provisions in their Terms of Reference that:

- Welcome continued involvement of family members following the death of their person.
- Define the roles and expectations of legacy members



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- Clarify that participation is at the discretion of the Council
 - Reflect that membership does not automatically end upon a resident's passing
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In essence:

Legacy family members are valued contributors whose continued presence strengthens the Council's compassion, continuity, and effectiveness—grounded in the principle that Family Councils are self-determining and guided by the collective voice of families.