



February 19, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

The British Columbia Self Advocate Leadership Network Society (BCSALN) is made up of self-advocates from leading organizations across the Province of BC. The majority of SALN members are part of provincial self-advocacy groups and advisory groups.

SALN vision is:

****Together as one *Community for All *Equal People * Learning from History
The SALN vision is what SALN wants for the disability community.***

SALN Mission Statement is:

To promote a good life through positive and informed: actions, networking, and advocacy. The SALN mission statement is what guides SALN. SALN and SALN members must follow the mission statement.

We are writing in response to the recent coroner's inquest into the circumstances surrounding the death of Florence Girard. We wish to express our continued support for Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) and the significant role it has played in ensuring adults with developmental disabilities have the supports and services they need to lead good lives and participate fully in their communities. In addition, let us not forget CLBC was created by a grassroots movement of self-advocates (several are active members of BCSALN), families, services providers and other community and government partners who called for choice and change.

We have no desire to see CLBC dissolved or for another branch of the government to take over the management of adult services in our province. It is crucial for CLBC to remain responsible for these services for the following reasons:

- The supports & services provided by CLBC are person-centered and based on the principles of self-determination. These services and supports are more innovative and flexible than in past years prior to CLBC's creation. In past year's individuals had to fit into existing programs.
- CLBC has worked closely with agencies to create inclusive employment opportunities & entrepreneurship.

- CLBC has established and maintained community councils to help identify the needs/barriers of individuals within those communities.
- CLBC has created committees and programs, which self-advocates actively participate in, allowing them a platform to voice their concerns.
- CLBC provides grants to self-advocate groups, enabling us to raise awareness, to attend workshops, and engage in conferences to expand our knowledge and grow our membership while educating others at the same time.
- CLBC has developed strong relationships with service providers that we depend on, and which may not continue if changes were made.

Despite our support for CLBC, we have serious concerns and questions regarding the circumstances surrounding Florence Girard's death.

How was a vulnerable person, living in a supervised agency home share, allowed to deteriorate in this way without anyone noticing or questioning her care? We are concerned that this could have happened to any one of us. Why wasn't the home share monitored regularly, as required by the agency's obligations? How could this have fallen through the cracks?

We understand that this tragedy resulted not from a single error, but from a series of mistakes. As such, we would like to offer the following recommendations for moving forward:

- Every individual entering a home share should be provided with their rights and a plan, written in plain language, that they understand, and which is reviewed regularly with them.
- Monitoring of services should be more frequent and done with an "eyes on" approach, not from a distance.
- Family members should also be educated about their rights, including their right to access their family member and to question the care being provided. They should know who to contact if they have concerns or if they are denied access.
- Clear, transparent protocols and procedures should be established and made accessible to all, not just within agencies, with consistent standards applied across the province.
- An open and transparent accountability system should be established, ensuring that supports are available when a home share provider requests assistance.

As Self-Advocates, we advocate not only for ourselves but also for those who may be unable to do so. We see this as an opportunity to express our concerns, identify what went wrong, and offer potential solutions. As a society, we can only grow and advance when we acknowledge our mistakes and are given the chance to correct them and do better in the future.

Sincerely,

BC Self-Advocate Leadership Network Society