



BC Disability Collaborative Terms of Reference

Approved Oct. 17, 2023

Revised Jan. 17, 2024; Feb. 9, 2024; Dec. 11, 2024

Vision

The BC Disability Collaborative **envisions** a more inclusive British Columbia

- where disability is celebrated as part of human diversity and
- where individualized, equitable supports and services are readily available for all children and youth with support needs and their families.

Mission

The BC Disability Collaborative was formed as a response to specific government funding changes, as a collective voice in the moment to influence positive change.

- The BCDC's mission is to unify disparate voices in the disability community in order to ensure that government policies honour and respect the protected rights of disabled citizens, and to address systemic inequities by advocating for tailored support needs for children and youth with support needs and their family members. Family members include parents, foster parents, guardians, siblings, and members of the extended family.

Values

BCDC members aim to show up united, respectful, and focused on our common purpose, while also being transparent and accountable. We aim to foster a culture where kind, clear communication is the norm. Our values are:

- **Compassion & Action:** With compassion for our community in mind, we seek meaningful action towards long-term change.
- **Respect & Humility:** We acknowledge each other's unique journeys, and seek to learn from each other's experiences.
- **Authentic Unity:** Even with diverse perspectives, we're united in our common purpose.
- **Transparency & Accountability:** We will be transparent in our own decisions, and accountable to a high standard of integrity.
- **Equity & Advocacy:** We push for a more equitable system, being conscious of privilege and bias while acknowledging intersectionality and culture.
- **Autonomy:** At all times, we advocate to government entities in the best interest of children and youth with support needs and their families, without constraint or obligation.

Bullying, harassment, and/or intimidation: In line with these values, verbal, signed, or written bullying, harassment, and/or intimidation of BCDC members will not be tolerated. Such behaviour may result in removal of the offending party as a representative of their organization or removal of the organization in its entirety from the BCDC. Complaints should be presented to

the Chair and will be presented to members for discussion and determination of the outcome.

Scope

The BCDC aims to serve as an influential force advocating for change in BC Provincial government policies affecting children and youth with support needs. Through data-sharing and dialogue with each other, we will set goals, amplify voices, and influence BC policy to better serve children and youth with support needs and their family members.

Our scope is to:

- **Listen to and amplify our communities' voices:** Listen to the voice of living experience and bring this directly to the government, on behalf of all children and youth with support needs and their families or immediate support system.
- **Share data and information:** Rely on this diverse group as a learning base to share relevant data among group members, for better collaboration and communication.
- **Set collective goals:** Learn from each other's perspectives, in order to set and pursue annual goals, strategies, and approaches.
- **Influence policy and legislation:** Advocate and activate legislative and policy changes related to the protected rights of disabled citizens at the Provincial level.

What we're not here to do:

- **Service provision:** The BCDC's focus is on advocacy, action, and accountability, not service provision/delivery.
- **Advocacy that applies only to a specific disability group,** rather than development of an equitable system of services for **all** children and youth with support needs.

Confidentiality

- **Exposure:** Representatives of BCDC member organizations may be exposed to confidential, privileged, and/or proprietary information (e.g., financial records, members' personal information, passwords). Similarly, third party contractors, consultants, and partners working with the BCDC or member organizations may be privy to sensitive information.
- **Information sharing:** Representatives of BCDC member organizations may share information with members of the Board of Directors of their organization as necessary in order to represent the Board's decision prior to a vote and/or communicate decisions and initiatives to the Board. Otherwise, information discussed at BCDC meetings or shared in document form must be kept confidential both during and after a representative's association with the BCDC.
- **Confidentiality Agreement:** A member of the leadership team of each BCDC organization will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement annually and communicate the details of the agreement to all Board members and organization representatives.
- **Third party contractors, consultants, and partners:** Third party contractors, consultants, and partners working with the BCDC or member organizations may not share BCDC information with any outside party. Third party contractors, consultants, and partners will be required to sign the Confidentiality Agreement if their work is directly related to BCDC activities.
- **Failure to comply:** Confidentiality breaches will be discussed on an individual basis by the membership to determine a response based on the harm caused to the BCDC as a whole, member organizations, member representatives, and/or third party partners. Failure to abide

by the requirements of the Confidentiality Agreement may result in suspension from participation in BCDC activities for a period of time, termination of a third party or consultant contract, or removal of an organization from the BCDC.

Member Organizations

Membership Criteria

- **Non-profit:** Any type of not-for-profit disability-related organization for children and youth with support needs that is registered in good standing under the Societies Act for at least 2 years can be a member of the BCDC, regardless of whether they receive ongoing government funding. The 2-year requirement is meant to ensure that an organization has an established record of advocacy as well as the experience, resources, and/or expertise to meaningfully contribute to the BCDC's mission.
- **Professional groups/associations:** Organizations that represent professional groups and have been established for at least 2 years can also be members.
- **Aligned:** Member organizations will be (a) aligned with BCDC's mission, vision, values and scope; and (b) endorse and adhere to the confidentiality agreement.
- **Committed:** Member organizations will be represented by individuals who can offer time, resources, and active participation.
- **Representative:** Member organizations will provide diverse representation across the disability sector.

Membership Processes

- **Annual Review:** New member nominations and applications will be considered on an annual basis in December-January as part of a strategic planning process by the leadership team that includes a review of membership capacity. Considerations for admitting a new organization will include (a) the extent to which it aligns with the BCDC's goals and activities and (b) the need to expand the scope of current member organizations.
- **Nomination Process:** Organizations that meet the membership criteria and that members believe will add value to the BCDC can be nominated by the existing membership. Nominations will be reviewed in light of the annual strategic plan and membership criteria and decision-making will be in accordance with the voting procedures in the Terms of Reference (ToR) document.
- **Application Process:** Organizations that wish to join can apply. Their application will be reviewed in light of the annual strategic plan and membership criteria, and decisions will be made in accordance with the voting procedures in this ToR document.

Voting Processes

All decisions are made by **voting**. A **unanimous vote** of member organizations is required to accept a new member nomination or application (proxy votes are accepted). Otherwise, a **two-thirds majority (66%)** is required for a vote to pass.

Voting Principles

- **Transparency:** The decision-making process, including discussions, declarations, and the voting outcome, shall be documented and made available to all members to ensure transparency.
- **Anonymous Voting – Not Allowed:** All votes shall be transparent, ensuring that

members are accountable for their choices. No anonymous voting is allowed.

Conflict of Interest

- All member organizations are expected to follow the Conflict of Interest (COI) policy.
- A COI is a situation in which member organization is involved in multiple interests whereby serving one of those interests could involve working against another.
- In the BCDC, a COI exists when a set of circumstances creates a risk that a member organization's ability to adhere to the vision, mission, and/or values outlined in the BCDC Terms of Reference is unduly influenced by a secondary interest.
 - *Secondary interests* include a financial benefit, an organization's advancement, and/or the desire of the organization to gain favour or avoid potential retribution.
- Prior to each vote, member organizations are expected to assess whether they have a potential, perceived, or real competing interest in relation to the vote. The Chair/co-Chair will remind members of the COI policy and their obligation to declare a COI by reading the following statement:
 - *This is a reminder to declare any conflict of interest related to the meeting agenda item(s). BCDC member organizations must remain cognizant of the need to stay neutral and impartial and must be aware of and state any potential, perceived, or real competing interest. If a COI exists in relation to vote, that member organization is expected to abstain from the vote. Does anyone have a conflict of interest to declare?*

Voting

- Each member organization has one vote, regardless of whether or not they receive *ongoing* government funding. All member organizations will, wherever possible, make every effort toward increasing representation on their Boards to reflect a minimum 25% representation of individuals with *living experience*. Recognizing the importance of incorporating living experience within BCDC's advocacy work, the living experience representation of member organizations will be reviewed annually and reported out to the membership by the BCDC leadership committee.
 - "Ongoing" is defined as continuous funding provided by a government Ministry on an annual basis to support the activities of the organization. It does not include grants or types of funding that require submission of an application and are competitive and/or discretionary in nature.
 - "Living experience" is defined as being (a) a person with a disability/support needs, (b) the parent/grandparent/caregiver of a person with a disability/support needs, or (c) the sibling of a person with a disability/support needs.

Proxy Voting

- Organizations may vote by proxy. A proxy holder stands in the place of the voting organization and can do anything that a member organization can do, including but not limited to proposing and seconding resolutions, participating in discussions, and voting.
- A proxy holder must be a representative of another BCDC member organization or the Chair/co-Chair of the BCDC.
- The appointment of a proxy holder must occur prior to a vote and:
 - Must be presented in writing, which includes email, and must be communicated to the Chair/co-Chair of the BCDC.

- Is valid only at the meeting for which the appointment is given, and
- May be revoked at any time (e.g., if a CoI is declared)

Leadership Roles & Responsibilities

The BCDC values compassionate leadership rooted in living experience, emphasizing strong communication, commitment, and organizational skills for all roles.

Leadership Criteria

- **Living experience** is highly valued, as it provides authentic insight and understanding.
- **Strong oral and/or written communication skills** are required.
- **Organizational skills and time management skills** are necessary, especially for the Chair and co-Chair.
- **The ability to listen with respect** and foster relationships is important.
- Independence and no actual or appearance of **conflict of interest** is essential.
- A **commitment** to creating a better future is a shared vision.

At a minimum, the BCDC leadership team will consist of a:

- Chair/Lead Facilitator (sets and communicates meeting dates, creates agendas, leads a goal-setting process, keeps discussions on track, organizes documents/events)
- Co-Chair/Assistant Facilitator (assists the Chair or temporarily assumes the role of Chair, as necessary)
- Secretary (minutes, attendance record keeping, monitoring chat during virtual meetings, document management)
- Treasurer (fund management, invoice processing)

Additional roles and associated responsibilities may be added as needed.

Leadership Elections

Elections will be held every 2 years. The Chair and Co-Chair will be elected in alternate years, as will the Secretary and Treasurer. Leadership roles will be filled by the following process:

- **Nominations** will be received for individuals who meet the criteria to fill the leadership roles. Self-nominations are acceptable.
- Members will hold a vote to decide on who fills the role.

Budget & Funding

Funding is currently allocated for the following:

- Engagement with key stakeholders to inform advocacy efforts related to the Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN) framework currently under review by the Ministry of Children & Family Development (MCFD).
- Reimbursement of volunteer members and leaders at a rate of \$40/hour for meetings attended, to a maximum of two members per organization. Reimbursement for work outside of meetings will be determined on an ad hoc basis as needed, by a vote of member organizations.

Accountability and Documentation

Accountability

- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the leadership team. Suggested revisions will be presented to the membership for a vote on an annual basis.
- We aim to build a culture that functions according to the values defined in the Values section of this document. Members are expected to initiate individual conversations to resolve interpersonal issues of concern. If an issue cannot be resolved individually, members involved may call upon the leadership team to act as an intermediary.

Documentation

- Minutes and Treasurer's reports shall be filed in the password-protected Members Only section of the BCDC website for easy access and transparency.