

Annual Report 2025–2026

PART FIVE

Listening, Learning, and Working Together



Written by **Tiffany Fearon** Published **September 16, 2026**

If I had to sum up this year in one word, it would be *voice*. Not just giving our caregivers and councils a voice, but making sure it reaches the tables where decisions are made — grounded in what residents and families are really experiencing.

Building a Strategy Around Our Principles

This year, the Policy and Impact portfolio launched a new strategy, and it's genuinely one of the things I'm proudest of. It's grounded in three principles that guide everything we do: service user engagement, capacity building, and evidence-informed decision-making. These aren't just words on a page for our team — they shaped how we approached every submission, every roundtable, every relationship we built throughout the year.

With the strategy in place, we strengthened our presence across the sector and participated in a number of key provincial consultations, including:

- Ontario 2026 Budget Consultation
- Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long-Term Care "As of Right" Consultation
- Palliative Care Services Public Review
- Falls in Adults Quality Standard Public Feedback
- Frailty in Adults Quality Standard Public Feedback
- Strengthening Family Councils under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 — our submission to the Ministry of Long-Term Care

Together, these contributions helped ensure resident and family perspectives were reflected in provincial and national policy discussions shaping the future of long-term care. That's the heart of this work — making sure the people living this experience aren't an afterthought in the rooms where decisions are made.

What We Learned

The biggest learning for me this year was a confirmation of something I've believed for a while: authentic resident and family experience needs to be embedded throughout every stage of policy development, not layered on at the end. When we bring lived experience together with research, data, and sector evidence, our recommendations are stronger and our impact is greater. It's not lived experience *or* evidence — it's both, working together to create meaningful change. .

The other piece that kept showing up all year was relationships. Every consultation, every submission, every opportunity to influence widespread policy change came back to the relationships we've built with government and sector partners. Family caregiver perspectives remain an integral part of system planning because we've done the work to build those relationships, stay in the room, and earn trust in what we bring to the table.

"Meaningful policy change begins with listening, learning, and working together. By bringing together lived experience, evidence, and collaboration, we can help shape a long-term care system that is more responsive, inclusive, and grounded in the needs of the communities it serves."

— Tiffany Fearon, Policy & Impact Director

Milestones Worth Celebrating

This year marked the development and implementation of FCO's new Policy Strategy — a clear framework that helped us better prepare for our ongoing touchpoints with the Ministry and bring forward recommendations grounded in what we've heard through consultations with residents, families, and Family Councils. This included recommendations to strengthen the Fixing Long-Term Care Act by improving clarity, guidance, and understanding of the legislation; ensuring Family Councils can function effectively as autonomous groups; supporting productive collaboration between Family Councils and home leadership; and increasing the effectiveness of Family Councils by centring resident experience.

I'm especially proud that we were invited to participate on the Toronto Long-Term Care Home Advisory Committee this year. That invitation reflects something bigger than one committee seat — it signals the growing recognition of the value resident and family perspectives bring to local system planning. Alongside that, we engaged in dialogue with sector partners to identify key gaps, shared priorities, and opportunities to improve the current state of the sector. While change won't happen overnight, we are hopeful that our efforts will help shift how our communities see, understand, and approach the sector.

Where We're Headed Next

In the coming year, our focus is on strengthening FCO's policy influence further — increasing our participation in government and sector consultations and expanding the opportunities we have to bring resident and family voices directly into policy dialogue. One of our key priorities will be n convening a provincial roundtable to bring together sector partners and caregivers to identify emerging trends, share insights, and inform collaborative solutions to improve the sector.

We're also looking forward to contributing to the revision of the National Long-Term Care Operations and Infection Prevention and Control Standard, making sure resident and family perspectives are reflected in the updates.

Building on the strides we've made this year, we'll continue to be a vehicle for our service users to shape and improve the long-term care experience.