

Provincial Update on Auditor General Recommendations
Department of Community Services
AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2012

Since 2009, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) has made 41 recommendations to the Department of Community Services, in efforts to improve government for the people of Nova Scotia. The Department has made every effort to address these recommendations. Of the 41 recommendations made, 16 have already been completed, and 25 are in progress.

Recommendations assigned to Department of Community Services:

Recommendations by Chapter	Complete	Work In Progress	Action no Longer Required	Do not Intend to Implement	Total Recommendations
November 2010					
Chapter 2: Rent Supplement Housing	7	2	-	-	9
Chapter 3: Services for Persons with Disabilities	9	20	-	-	29
November 2011					
Chapter 4: Protection of Persons in Care	-	3	-	-	3
Total	16	25	-	-	41
Percentages	39%	61%	0%	0%	100%

Recommendations in Detail:

Month & Year	Chapter	Recommendation	Status	Brief summary of actions taken
Nov. 2010	2	2.1	Complete	The department completed a review of the Finance Manual and the Applicant, Tenant & Property Management Manual which resulted in some revisions/updates. The department has implemented an ongoing process to review manuals and, when required, update in a timely manner.
Nov. 2010	2	2.2	Complete	The department developed and implemented an internal self-audit process with templates to annually review applicant files. All Housing Authorities completed the review and reported the results to the department.

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 AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2012

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Nov. 2010	2	2.3	Complete	The department developed and implemented an internal self-audit process with templates to annually review applicant files. All Housing Authorities completed the review and reported the results to the department.
Nov. 2010	2	2.4	Work in Progress	<p>The department provides guidance and advice to proponents to ensure the requirements of the program are addressed in their proposals. Proposals are assessed based on a number of standard criteria such as sustainability, client needs, equity, etc.</p> <p>The department is currently developing a provincial housing strategy. This strategy involves a review of all existing housing programs to ensure the strategy will meet future housing needs. A consultation for the Housing Strategy is planned for Fall 2012.</p>
Nov. 2010	2	2.5	Work in Progress	Utilizing the Mortgage Management Information System, the department is putting in place a process to monitor the rental rates of units created through affordable housing subsidies.
Nov. 2010	2	2.6	Complete	As of January 2012, Housing Authorities have been directed to ensure developers obtain a municipal occupancy permit before placing rent supplement tenants or public housing tenants in newly built rental housing. This includes new rental housing developed by both the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation and private developers.
Nov. 2010	2	2.7	Complete	All relevant policies have been updated and issued to Housing Authorities: Applicant, Tenant, Property Management (includes Rent

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				Supplement), Finance and Procurement.
Nov. 2010	2	2.8	Complete	The department has reviewed the risks associated with not completing annual inspections on rent supplement units and has updated the policy in recognizing municipal jurisdiction over building standards. Housing Authorities may still conduct inspections if they suspect substandard conditions and make reports to the landlord or authority having jurisdiction.
Nov. 2010	2	2.9	Complete	New performance measures have been established for the Housing Authorities. Areas of performance include vacant unit turn-around time, vacancy rate and value of rental arrears. Measures are reported on a monthly basis. Targets have been set using accepted industry standards as a guide. Actual performance measured against performance targets form part of each Housing Authority director's annual performance appraisal.
Nov. 2010	3	3.1	Work in Progress	An early draft framework has been prepared. Additional resources have been secured to lead the development of the strategic plan. The SPD strategic plan will be informed by the work of the Continuing Care/Service for Persons with Disabilities Strategy. This is a joint project between DHW and DCS which will address gaps in services and ensure better and more responsive services. DHW and DCS are engaging in a province-wide consultation process that will provide an opportunity for the public and sector to provide input.
Nov. 2010	3	3.2	Work in	The operational plan will be informed by and

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			Progress	<p>follow the completion of an SPD strategic plan.</p> <p>In the interim, the department is working on addressing the outstanding recommendations such as expansion of the Independent Living Support (ILS) and Alternative Family Support (AFS) Programs are underway. Additionally, a new program, Enhanced Family Support is being developed to support family members with high needs.</p>
Nov. 2010	3	3.3	Work in Progress	<p>DCS has seconded resources for six months to lead the work on defining/clarifying the future goals, objectives and priorities of the SPD program.</p> <p>The department is monitoring the status of all strategic initiatives on a monthly basis.</p>
Nov. 2010	3	3.4	Work in Progress	<p>DCS has seconded resources for six months to lead the work on defining/clarifying the future goals, objectives and priorities of the SPD program. Measures will be developed to support progress monitoring and action.</p> <p>The department is monitoring the status of all strategic initiatives on a monthly basis.</p>
Nov. 2010	3	3.5	Work in Progress	<p>The future needs and direction of the SPD program will be defined through the SPD Strategic Planning process.</p> <p>In the meantime, the department considers information such as the provincial wait list data, population and program trends, and jurisdictional research.</p> <p>The evaluation of SPD programs will also</p>

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				inform future needs and enhancements. The evaluation of the ILS Program is currently underway and recommendations are expected in Fall 2012.
Nov. 2010	3	3.6	Work in Progress	A number of SPD policies and procedures have been updated, such as the Financial, Program Eligibility, and Basic and Special Needs Policies. These new policies took effect in July 2012. The Level of Support Policy is in draft form and will replace the Classification and Assessment Manual.
Nov. 2010	3	3.7	Complete	As of February 2012, all 178 Small Option Homes have been licensed. Small Options Homes now fall under the Homes for Special Care Regulations which was amended for their inclusion. The policies of all SPD residential programs now apply to Small Options Homes, which use the same set of indicators based on the regulations for licensing requirements.
Nov. 2010	3	3.8	Work in Progress	The draft Levels of Support Policy has been sent to regional staff and service providers for their review and feedback, and will be finalized once a Coordinator of Assessment is in place. The hiring process is currently underway.
Nov. 2010	3	3.9	Work in Progress	The department is developing quality assurance tools to ensure the appropriate information is captured in the client files (hard copy and electronic). Core training is being developed for staff. The tentative date for staff training is Fall 2012.

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Nov. 2010	3	3.10	Complete	All SPD regional staff participated in an orientation session in conjunction with the rollout of the revised SPD policies.
Nov. 2010	3	3.11	Work in Progress	The service standards for the residential service sector (all licensed homes) have been drafted. Finalizing these standards requires consulting with the sector. A consultation plan was prepared and is moving through the approval process.
Nov. 2010	3	3.12	Work in Progress	Individual planning is addressed in the draft service standards for the residential service sector. A formal plan template has been developed to ensure consistency in the process. Further consistency and oversight will be achieved through core training and monitoring.
Nov. 2010	3	3.13	Complete	SPD policies, procedures and related forms have been reviewed, updated, approved, and implemented.
Nov. 2010	3	3.14	Work in Progress	Annual reviews and reassessments are required in the revised SPD policies. To support the policy, a quality assurance monitoring process with defined roles and responsibilities will be developed and included in SPD core training. This work will be aided by the new Coordinator of Assessment.
Nov. 2010	3	3.15	Complete	SPD has developed and implemented a wait list process, form and User Guide. This was implemented in Fall 2010.

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Nov. 2010	3	3.16	Complete	SPD has developed and implemented a wait list process, form and User Guide. This was implemented in Fall 2010. A staff person in Head Office has been assigned the responsibility of monitoring the ongoing accuracy of the wait list and generating monthly provincial wait list reports.
Nov. 2010	3	3.17	Complete	SPD requires that all small option home operators follow the same incident and complaint processes as other SPD service providers. The recent licensing of small option homes will ensure consistency in reporting incidents and complaints.
Nov. 2010	3	3.18	Work in Progress	The department has developed draft processes and forms to support a centralized incident and complaint system. Departmental stakeholders are currently being consulted.
Nov. 2010	3	3.19	Work in Progress	The department has developed draft processes and forms to support a centralized incident and complaint system. Departmental stakeholders are currently being consulted.
Nov. 2010	3	3.20	Work in Progress	The department has developed draft processes and forms to support a centralized incident and complaint system. This includes a formal review process.
Nov. 2010	3	3.21	Complete	Staff orientation sessions have been provided, and the updated policies were implemented in July 2012.
Nov. 2010	3	3.22	Work in Progress	SPD program staff are working with staff from the Process Improvement and IT Services units

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				to improve the payment process.
Nov. 2010	3	3.23	Work in Progress	The department is beginning the second round of rate review; this work must be completed before the staffing guidelines can be finalized.
Nov. 2010	3	3.24	Work in Progress	The Direct Family Support Policy is being updated and will include expectations concerning roles and responsibilities. This policy work will be completed in Winter 2013.
Nov. 2010	3	3.25	Work in Progress	The department is reviewing existing service agreement templates. An initial consultation was completed with sector representative. Further discussions are planned as part of the residential service standards consultation.
Nov. 2010	3	3.26	Work in Progress	A standard individual program plan that is person focused has been drafted. The Annual Review form has been updated to emphasize the appropriate receipt of services as outlined in the individual program plan. A verification process will be developed to ensure compliance with SPD policies and standards.
Nov. 2010	3	3.27	Work in Progress	Documentation training was provided in June 2011. A verification process will be developed to ensure compliance with SPD policies and standards.
Nov. 2010	3	3.28	Complete	The regulation changes related to the <i>Homes for Special Care Act</i> have been approved and implemented (effective February 16, 2012).
Nov. 2010	3	3.29	Complete	Amendments to the Homes for Special Care

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				Act were proclaimed in February 2012.
Nov. 2011	4	4.4	Work in Progress	The department has completed jurisdictional research and a literature review on best practices to inform the development of an appeals process. The findings and options are being assessed in consultation with the DHW. The recommendations will then be presented to DCS Senior Management for their approval.
Nov. 2011	4	4.7	Work in Progress	The department has identified a possible IT solution. A business case is being prepared as first step toward securing the resources necessary to move the project forward.
Nov. 2011	4	4.8	Work in Progress	Performance indicators are being finalized based on the objectives and goals of the program. A process to support ongoing tracking and reporting is in development.