

**PROVINCIAL UPDATE ON AUDITOR GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:  
Department of Community Services**

**Introduction**

The **Department of Community Services** has 3 Auditor General chapters from April 2009 to May 2012 with a total of 41 recommendations. With 61 % of these recommendations complete, Community Services has made the implementation of the remaining recommendations a priority for the Department. The Department of Community Services recognizes the importance of the work of the Auditor General and values its policy advice as one more contributing factor to a more efficient and effective public sector.

**Recommendations by Chapter:**

Month & Year	Chapter	Chapter Title	Complete	Work In Progress	Action No Longer Required	Do Not Intend To Implement	Total Recommendations
Nov-10	Chapter 2	Rent Supplement Housing	7	2			9
Nov-10	Chapter 3	Services for Persons with Disabilities	17	11	1		29
Nov-11	Chapter 4	Protection of Persons in Care	1	2			3
<b>Total</b>			<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Percentage</b>			<b>61%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>2%</b>		<b>100%</b>

**Brief Summary of Recommendations:**

Month & Year	Chapter & (Rec. #)	Status	Brief Summary of Status
Nov-10	Chapter 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-10	Chapter 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.
Nov-10	Chapter 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-10	Chapter 2 (4)	Work in Progress	The Province announced its Housing Strategy on May 6, 2013. Under the new Rental Program there will be an on-line application package for prospective proponents and a checklist which formally documents how proposals will be assessed.



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Nov-10	Chapter 2 (5)	Work in Progress	All units created under the New Rental and Rental Preservation programs (Affordable Housing Program) are now entered into the Mandela Mortgage Information System (MMIS). Rents for units receiving rent supplement are monitored and income tested by the Province's Housing Authorities. For projects that received a capital contribution, without rent supplement, Housing Nova Scotia will establish a monitoring system, drawing on MMIS, to annually sample units, determine rents and ensure compliance with the agreement.
Nov-10	Chapter 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-10	Chapter 2 (7)	Complete	All relevant policies have been updated and issued to Housing Authorities: Applicant, Tenant, Property Management (includes Rent Supplement), Finance and Procurement.
Nov-10	Chapter 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-10	Chapter 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-10	Chapter 3 (1)	Complete	A plan for the SPD program has been developed and shared with SPD staff across the province.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (2)	Action No Longer Required	Most of the recommendations have been implemented. Current plans relate directly to the new strategic direction of the department and SPD program.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (3)	Complete	The department has established a process to monitor all goals, objectives and priorities for the services for persons with disabilities program.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (4)	Complete	Performance measures have been developed based on the goals, objectives and outcomes of the SPD program.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (5)	Work in Progress	The department considers information such as the provincial wait list data, population and program trends, and jurisdictional research. The evaluation of SPD programs will also inform future needs and enhancements. The evaluation of the ILS Program has been completed and results will be incorporated into ILS policy updates. The future needs and direction of the SPD program will also be informed by the SPD Transformation Project.

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Nov-10	Chapter 3 (6)	Work in Progress	SPD policies and procedures have been updated, including Financial, Program Eligibility, and Basic and Special Needs Policies. These new policies took effect in July 2012. The final policy, Level of Support, has been drafted and is being submitted for approval to the Minister, for implementation this Fall.
Nov-10	Chapter 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 were 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-10	Chapter 3 (8)	Work in Progress	Quality assurance processes have been embedded in the Level of Support Policy. The policy is scheduled to be implemented in the Fall 2013.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (9)	Complete	Ensuring that the appropriate information is captured in the client's Individual Assessment and Support Plan (ISP) was part of the core training staff received in the Spring 2013.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (10)	Complete	All SPD regional staff participated in an orientation session in conjunction with the rollout of the revised SPD policies.
Nov-10	Chapter 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. The next step is the approval of the consultation plan.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (12)	Work in Progress	A Project Initiation document has been developed to guide the execution of a project that will ensure a consistent approach to clients support planning with clearly defined expectations, roles and responsibilities while ensuring plans are in accordance with SPD policies.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (13)	Complete	SPD policies, procedures and related forms have been reviewed, updated, approved, and implemented.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (14)	Complete	To ensure reviews and reassessments are documented appropriately, the department has developed documentation standards and standardized forms. Staff were trained on these standards in winter/spring 2013.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (15)	Complete	SPD has developed and implemented a wait list process, form and User Guide. This was implemented in Fall 2010.
Nov-10	Chapter 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 wait list and generating monthly provincial wait list reports.

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Nov-10	Chapter 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-10	Chapter 3 (18)	Work in Progress	The department has developed a draft policy and supporting material (process, forms and database) to support the development of a centralized incident and complaint system. Once this is approved, the database will be populated and the framework will be rolled out to staff and service providers.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (19)	Work in Progress	The department has developed a draft policy and supporting material (process, forms and database) to support the development of a centralized incident and complaint system. Once this is approved, the database will be populated and the framework will be rolled out to staff and service providers.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (20)	Work in Progress	The department has developed a draft policy and supporting material (process, forms and database) to support the development of a centralized incident and complaint system. A formal review process has been embedded in the draft policy. Once this is approved, the framework will be rolled out to staff and service providers.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (21)	Complete	Staff orientation sessions have been provided, and the updated policies were implemented in July 2012.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (22)	Complete	Developed and implemented a Calculation of Financial Eligibility form to replace the Budget Sheet (January 2013). SPD Policies were updated in July 2012 to clarify documentation requirements.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (23)	Work in Progress	The draft guidelines will be reviewed with 342 providers this year as part of the rate review process.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (24)	Work in Progress	The Direct Family Support Policy is being updated. The new policy will include expectations concerning roles and responsibilities. Once finalized these requirements will be incorporated into a letter of understanding between the department and the family or caregiver.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (25)	Work in Progress	There have been initial discussions with sector representatives. Negotiation of an agreement(s) yet to be achieved.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (26)	Complete	The review form and process has been revised to require documentation regarding the appropriate receipt of services as outlined in the individual program plan. Core training was delivered in the Spring 2013 emphasizing the importance of documentation.
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (27)	Complete	Documentation training was provided in June 2011. Further emphasis on documentation and file standards was delivered province-wide during Core Training (Spring 2013).
Nov-10	Chapter 3 (28)	Complete	The regulation changes related to the Homes for Special Care Act have been approved and implemented (effective February 16, 2012).



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Nov-10	Chapter 3 (29)	Complete	Amendments to the Homes for Special Care Act were proclaimed in February 2012.
Nov-11	Chapter 4 (4)	Work in Progress	The department has completed jurisdictional research and a literature review on best practices to better inform the decision on possible options/approach to appeals. This information was shared with staff from the Department of Health & Wellness (DHW). A position paper was drafted with a recommendation to conduct a 24 month pilot project. The recommendation was approved and planning is underway with a September launch date.
Nov-11	Chapter 4 (7)	Work in Progress	The DCS Director, Licensing Services has prepared a business case as first step toward securing resources necessary to move project forward. The next will be the development of a detailed business requirements document.
Nov-11	Chapter 4 (8)	Complete	Performance indicators have been defined and tracking and reporting is underway.