

Auditor General's Report:

Community Services and Health & Wellness: Protection of Persons in Care

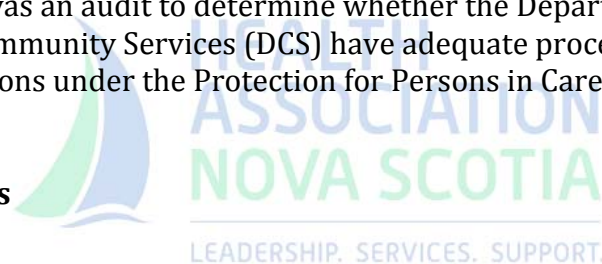
Summary

- The fall 2011 report of the Auditor General reviews the Department of Health and Wellness' and Department of Community Services' processes related to Protection for Persons in Care abuse allegation investigations.
- Generally, processes were found to be adequate.
- A major recommendation was to introduce an appeals process.
- A new draft policy manual and metrics measuring the performance of the program will be implemented by the end of the fiscal year.

Situation

The Office of the Auditor General (AG) released its fall 2011 report to the House of Assembly on Nov 16, 2011. Included in the report was an audit to determine whether the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) and Department of Community Services (DCS) have adequate processes to investigate and ensure resolution of reported allegations under the Protection for Persons in Care (PPC) Act.

Background – Key Highlights



Overall

Generally, the report found processes to be adequate.

Appeals Process

The AG found that neither the DHW nor DCS has an appeal process. Both the DCS and DHW indicated during the review that they did not believe an appeals process was necessary. However, following the report's release, the Minister of Community Services stated that the AG's recommendations are being considered and research is being conducted as to what a "review" process would look like (for fall 2012 implementation).

Updated Policy Manual

The DHW and DCS are collaborating to produce an updated PPC policy manual that will be more reflective of current practise (e.g. follow-up targets of 24 hours as opposed to 3 hours from receipt of complaint). The manual is expected to be complete in December 2011 with implementation this fiscal year.

Quality Review

It was found that the DCS has an adequate quality review process. The DHW has no such process, but a new checklist is being developed to address this problem.

Neither department has performance indicators related to the achievement of program goals. In response, the DHW and DCS indicated that measures will be developed by the end of this fiscal year.

Analysis

Perhaps the most pertinent recommendation from the AG is for the implementation of an appeal process. An effective appeal process is an important aspect of a complaints-based program such as PPC. While the report focuses on the benefit of an appeal for residents/clients, presumably such a process would be beneficial to an organization as well; as such processes are intended to be a mechanism to review the appropriateness of investigation decisions and to resolve disputes regarding outcomes.

Recommendations

For information.



List of Recommendations

Recommendation 4.1

The Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Community Services should complete and implement their new policy manual.

Recommendation 4.2

The Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Community Services should establish a process to ensure all complaints are tracked on intake to ensure the complaint was received at the appropriate central office.

Recommendation 4.3

The Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Community Services should ensure the revised policy manual reflects current and planned practices. Additionally, processes should be put in place to ensure that all policies are followed.

Recommendation 4.4

The Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Community Services should implement an appeal process for Protection of Persons in Care investigations.



Recommendation 4.6

The Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Community Services should develop processes to ensure that the data recorded in their systems is accurate and complete.

Recommendation 4.7

The Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Community Services should identify and implement a single information system with appropriate IT support.

Recommendation 4.8

The Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Community Services should establish performance indicators to measure achievement towards meeting program goals.