

# Office of the Child Advocate Report to Oversight Commission on Children's Services

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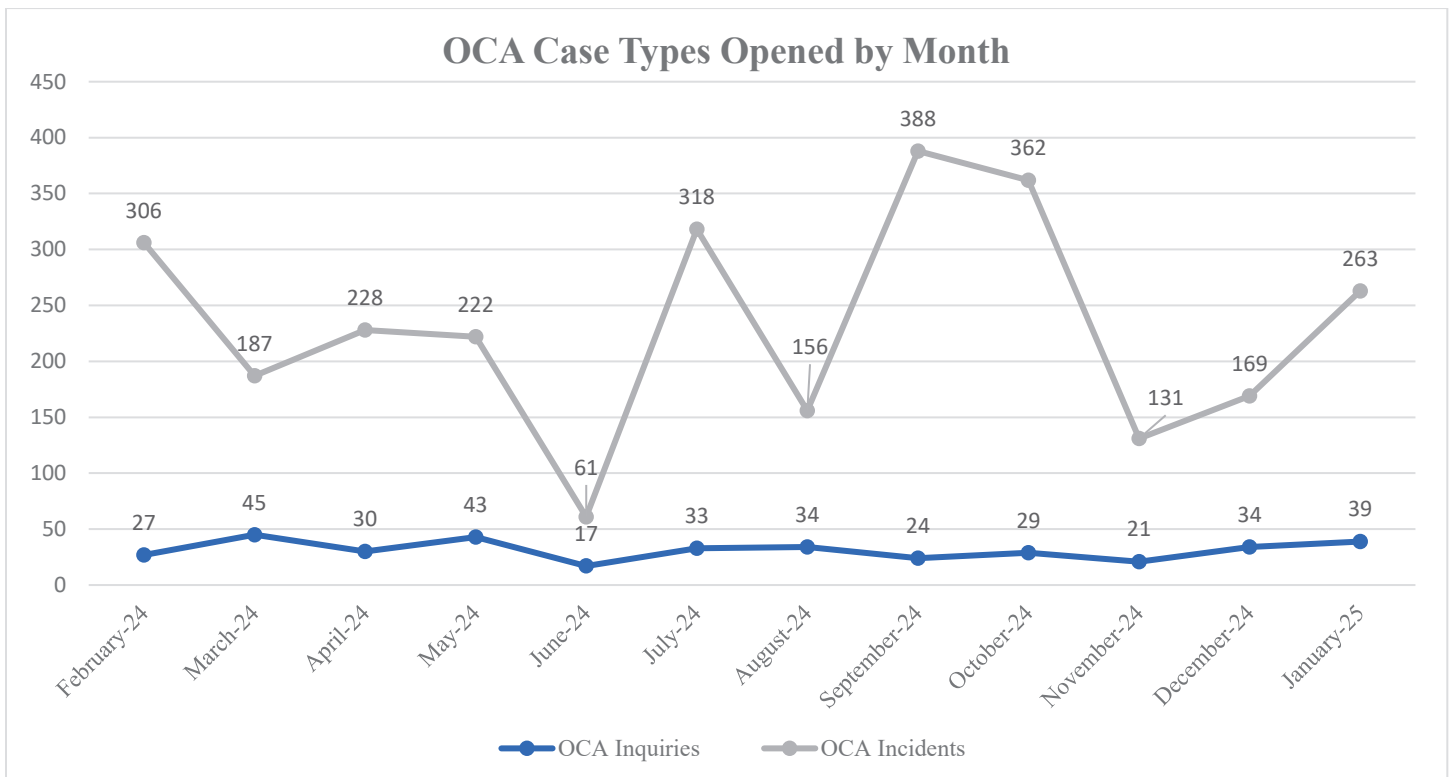
Child Advocate, Cassandra Sanchez

February 21, 2025

## Total OCA Cases (Inquiries & Incidents)

Rolling 12 Month: 02/01/24 – 01/31/25

Month	OCA Inquiries	OCA Incidents
February-24	27	306
March-24	45	187
April-24	30	228
May-24	43	222
June-24	17	61
July-24	33	318
August-24	34	156
September-24	24	388
October-24	29	362
November-24	21	131
December-24	34	169
January-25	39	263
<b>Total Inquiries:</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>2791</b>
<b>Total Cases:</b>	<b>3167</b>	

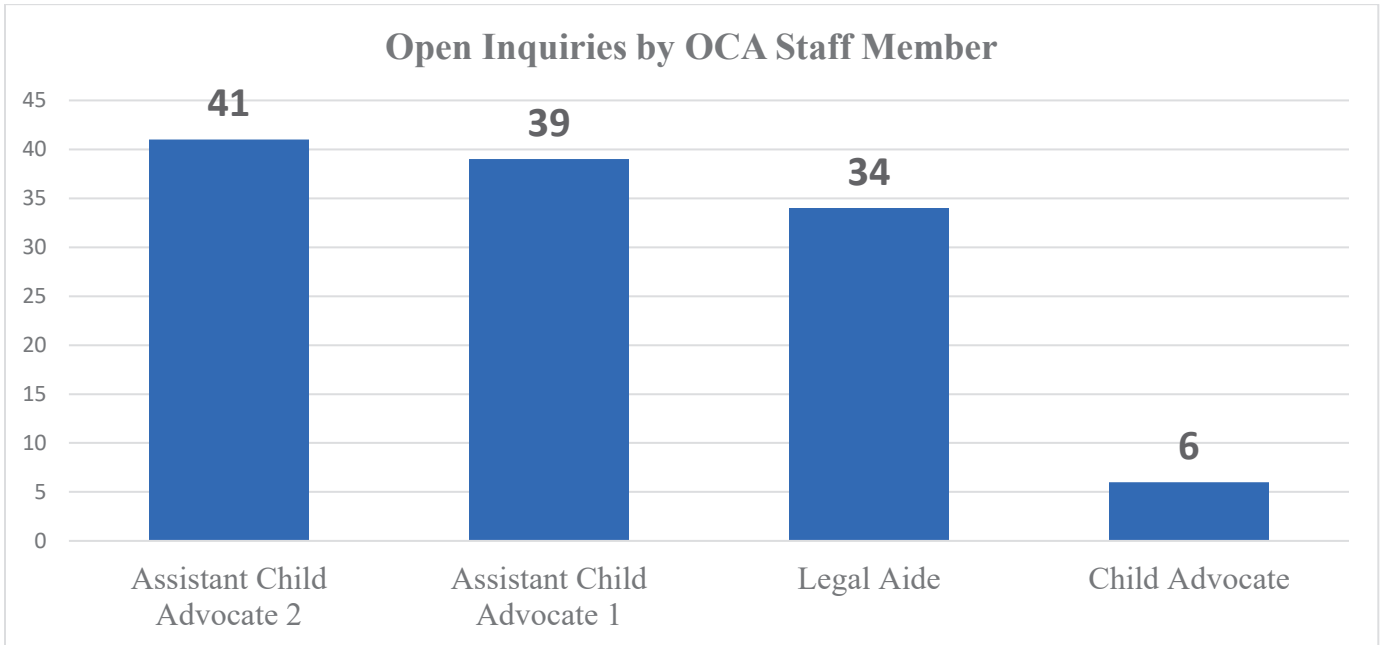


### OCA Case Explanation

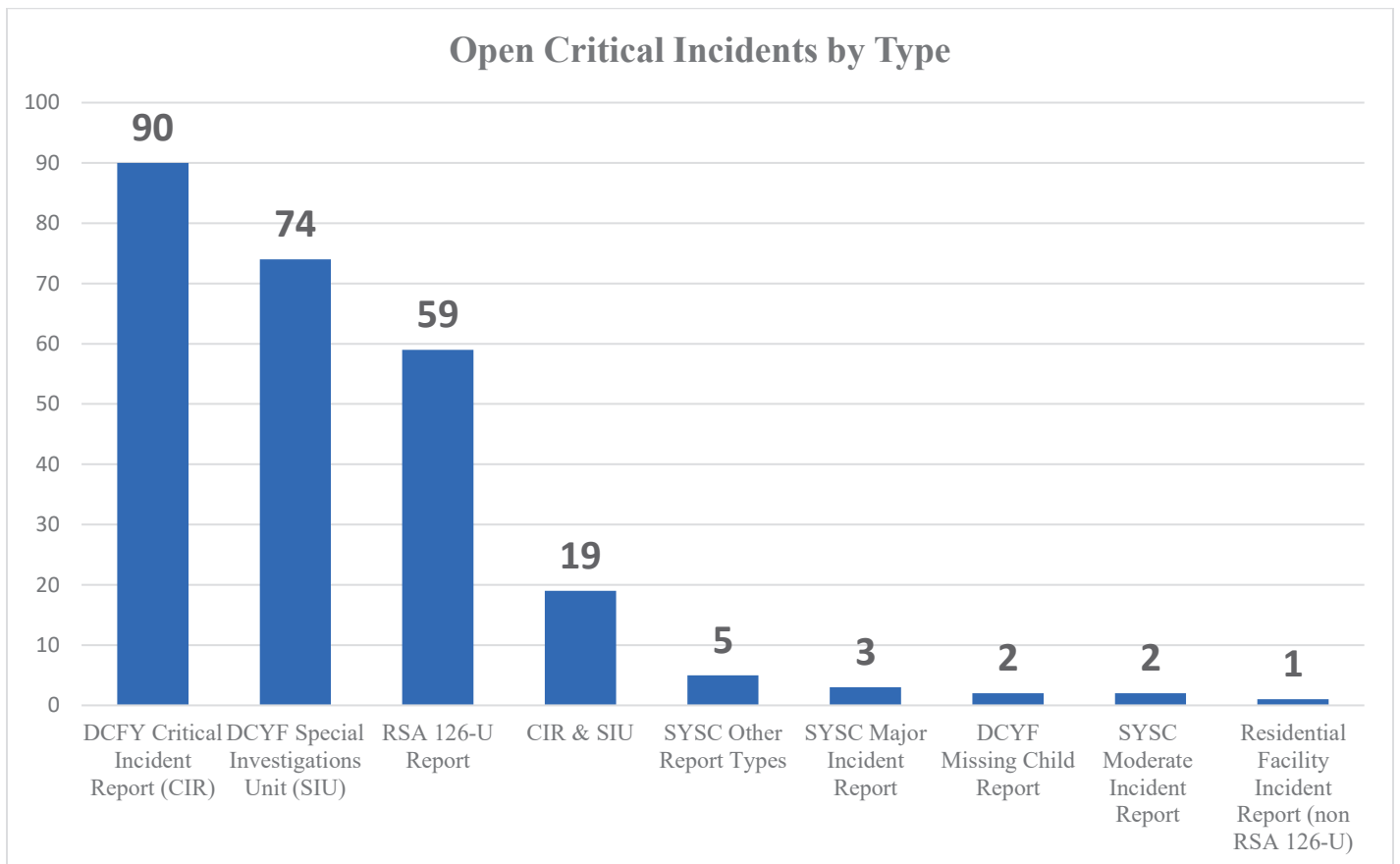
- Inquiries to the OCA include phone calls, emails, and cases opened from in-person meetings with children, caregivers, providers, and stakeholders.
- Incidents include all critical incident reports from DCYF (serious injury to children, child fatalities, parent fatalities, media coverage of DCYF involvement, etc.) and incidents documented by residential programs and SYSC, including restraints and seclusion, and missing children.

**Current OCA Caseload  
As of 02/18/2025**

**Total Open OCA Inquiries: 120**



**Total Open OCA Critical Incidents: 255**



### Facility/Child visits

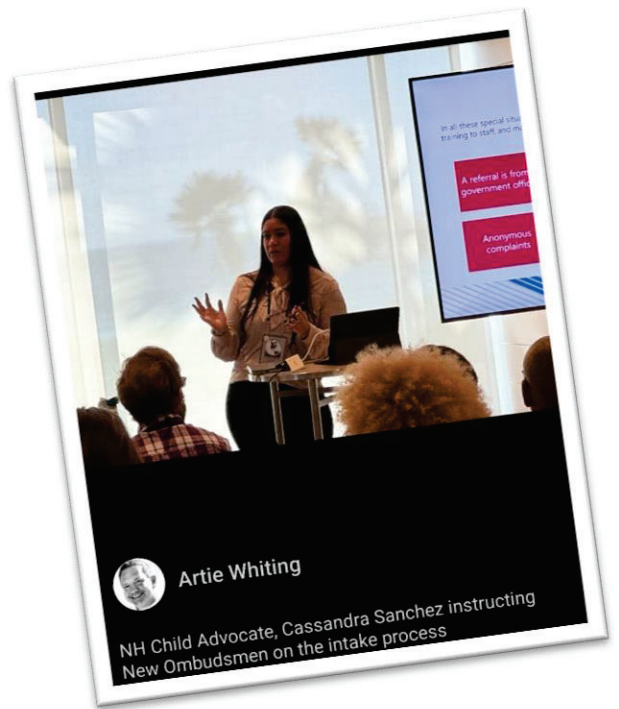
- 12/11/24 – The Cottage – *visit with specific child*
- 12/19/24 – The Cottage – *visit with specific child*
- 1/2/25 – Hampstead Hospital & PRPF
- 1/29/25 – NCH – *visit with specific children*
- 2/5/25 – home visit with child in care

### OCA Outreach/ DCYF District Office visits

- 11/1 – 11/30/24 – Attend Permanency Planning Team (PPT) meetings @ Southern District Office
- 12/1 – 12/31/24 - Attend Permanency Planning Team (PPT) meetings @ Seacoast District Office
- 1/1 – 1/31/25 – Attend Permanency Planning Team (PPT) meetings @ Keene District Office
- 12/3/24 – Presented at CASA Leadership Staff meeting (virtual)
- 1/7/25 – Presented to Juvenile Justice Reform Commission's (JJRC) Youth Group (virtual)
- 1/17/25 – Meeting with Executive Councilor, Karen Liot Hill
- 2/10/25 – Meeting with NFI North/TrECC (virtual)

### Conferences/Events Attended

- 11/18-11/19/24 – Presented New Ombudsman Training at US Ombudsman Association Annual Conference, Oceanside, CA (*pictured above*)
- 11/20-11/22/24 – Attended and presented at US Ombudsman Association Annual Conference, Oceanside, CA (*pictured below*)
- 12/11/24 – Webinar: Congregate Care, Collective Trauma
- 12/11/24 – Webinar: Race/Ethnicity and LGBTQ2S+ Youth
- 12/18/24 – Webinar: DCYF/Parent Attorney training on new legislation and Court forms
- 1/31/25 – Training for new Children’s Attorney’s, by Judicial Council and Children’s Law Center, Concord



### Upcoming Visits & Events

- 2/26/25 – visit to Chase Home, Portsmouth NH
- 2/28/25 – Attend Laconia District office staff meeting
- TBD – visit to Unity House, Keene NH
- 4/14 – 4/15/25 – DCYF Annual Conference, Manchester

### Other Work

- 11/26/24 – NH Child Fatality Review Committee DEI Learning Collaborative (Project Overview)
- 11/27/24 – SOC Tier 3 (Intensive Community Services) workgroup
- 12/2/24 – CRG Readiness Focus Group
- 1/9/25 – WMUR Close Up
- 2/21/25 – Juvenile Justice Transformation, Phase II

## **Other Work Continued**

Ongoing: YDC Steering Committee

Ongoing: Regular meetings with DCYF Human & Sex Trafficking Specialist

**Ongoing: Monthly meetings with DCYF leadership**

**Ongoing: Monthly meeting with Clinical Director at SYSC**

Ongoing: DCYF Systems Review meetings

Ongoing: US Ombudsman Association (USOA), Children & Family Chapter meetings

Ongoing: USOA Conference Planning Committee

Ongoing: Magnifying Voices Planning Committee

Ongoing: Model Court/CIP Executive Committee Meetings

Ongoing: Family Treatment Court (FTC) Oversight Team meetings

Ongoing: Child Fatality Review Committee meetings

**Ongoing: Monthly meetings with management team at Hampstead Hospital**

**Ongoing: Monthly meetings with BCBH leadership**

Ongoing: Children's System of Care Advisory Committee

Ongoing: Quarterly Community Collaboration Meetings regarding Justice-Involved LGBTQ2S+ Youth

## **Other Issues**

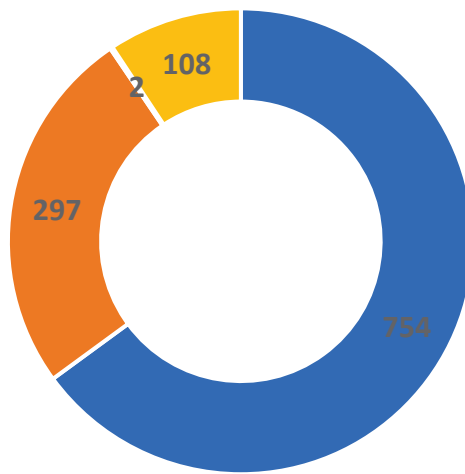
- Legislation
  - **HB 553** - Updated Abuse & neglect definitions and presumptions of harm, filed by Rep Alicia Gregg, after extensive work with Senator Carson and her study committee throughout the fall. Progressing through further subcommittee work sessions.
  - **SB 76** – RSA 21-V OCA clean-up bill discussed at the Oversight Commission and originally drafted at Senator Carson's request, was voted ITL by the new Senate Children & Family Law Committee. It seems there was some confusion about our role, the 2020 expansion of our oversight to include community agencies that provide services to system-involved children, as well as the need for the confidentiality of our office.
  - **HB 653** – Alternative to R&S School pilot program, filed by Rep Peter Petrigno, awaiting executive session.
  - **HB 523** – OCA Oversight of School R&S reports, filed by Rep Deb Desimone, is being withdrawn.
  - **SB 161** – DHHS' "clean-up" bill from SB 417. Agreed upon amendment heard on 2/20/25 and 3-0 vote OTP.
  - **Concern: HB 257** new crime of child neglect, vague and may tend to criminalize poor parents, interfering with goals of maintaining family unity.
- **Budget – there remains concern for adequate funding of the OCA, given our continued increase in inquiries, and the intensity of our caseloads.**
- The use of the Cottage was discontinued in early January. Hoteling continues to be utilized, although sparingly. DCYF and OCA have had more consistent communication around the staffing of children in hotels which has allowed for opportunities to collaborate on next steps for some children who may be more difficult to place.
- OCA has been unable to get out to facilities to visit children and assess care at the same rate that we did previously, including out of state visits, because of our increased caseloads and complexity of cases.
  - Visits to Hampstead Hospital and SYSC have remained a priority and happening on a nearly monthly basis.
- DCYF Central Intake
  - 27.61% of calls to central intake between 4/1/24 and 10/1/24 were abandoned.
    - **UPDATE:** OCA received further data which shows the greatest increase in abandoned calls in the months of March-May 2024, with an increase beginning in June and a steadier increase through August and September.
    - DCYF is continuing to analyze this data internally to focus on reduction of abandoned calls.

## New Hampshire Children in Care

As of 11/30/24

Placement Types	Total Children	%	Involvement Type		
			CPS	JJS	DUAL
Family-Like Setting:	754	65%	634	7	113
Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):	297	26%	122	40	135
Runaway:	2	<1%	0	0	2
Unknown/No Data:	108	9%	91	0	17
<b>Total Children in Care:</b>	<b>1161</b>		<b>847</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>267</b>

### Placement Types for Children In Care



■ Family-Like Setting: 
 ■ Group Care (Group Home or Inst.): 
 ■ Runaway: 
 ■ Unknown/No Data:

#### Family-Like Settings:

Type	Total Children	%
Foster Home:	396	53%
Relative Foster Home:	309	41%
Supervised Independent Living:	49	6%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>754</b>	

#### Group Care (Group Home or Institution) Locations:

Location	Total Children	%
New Hampshire:	236	79%
New England (Outside NH):	51	17%
Outside of New England:	10	3%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>297</b>	

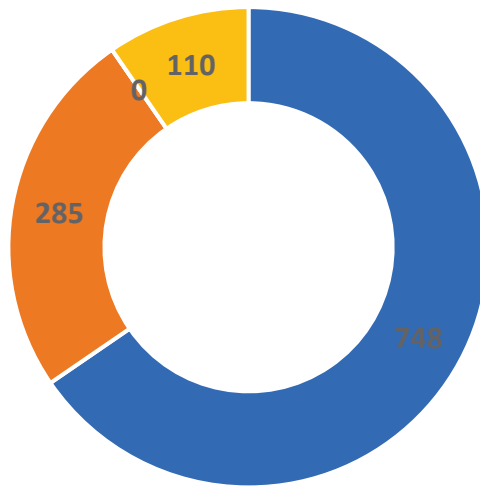
Children Outside New England	
Alabama	1
Arkansas	1
Florida	8
<b>Total:</b>	<b>10</b>

## New Hampshire Children in Care

As of 12/31/24

Placement Types	Total Children	%	Involvement Type		
			CPS	JJS	DUAL
Family-Like Setting:	748	65%	631	4	113
Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):	285	25%	116	37	132
Runaway:	0	0%	0	0	0
Unknown/No Data:	110	10%	91	1	18
<b>Total Children in Care:</b>	<b>1143</b>		<b>838</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>263</b>

### Placement Types for Children In Care



■ Family-Like Setting:  
 ■ Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):  
 ■ Runaway:  
 ■ Unknown/No Data:

#### Family-Like Settings:

Type	Total Children	%
Foster Home:	403	54%
Relative Foster Home:	298	40%
Supervised Independent Living:	47	6%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>748</b>	

#### Group Care (Group Home or Institution) Locations:

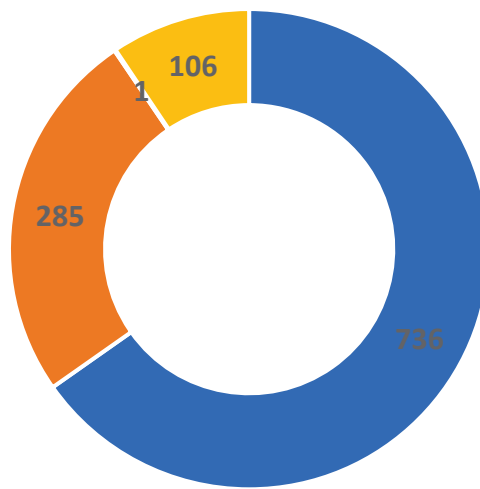
Location	Total Children	%
New Hampshire:	222	78%
New England (Outside NH):	55	19%
Outside of New England:	8	3%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>285</b>	

Children Outside New England	
Alabama	1
Arkansas	1
Florida	6
<b>Total:</b>	<b>8</b>

**New Hampshire Children in Care**  
As of 1/31/25

Placement Types	Total Children	%	Involvement Type		
			CPS	JJS	DUAL
Family-Like Setting:	736	65%	622	5	109
Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):	285	25%	120	35	130
Runaway:	1	< 1%	0	0	0
Unknown/No Data:	106	9%	86	1	19
<b>Total Children in Care:</b>	<b>1128</b>		<b>828</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>259</b>

**Placement Types for Children In Care**



■ Family-Like Setting: ■ Group Care (Group Home or Inst.): ■ Runaway: ■ Unknown/No Data:

**Family-Like Settings:**

Type	Total Children	%
Foster Home:	408	55%
Relative Foster Home:	284	39%
Supervised Independent Living:	44	6%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>736</b>	

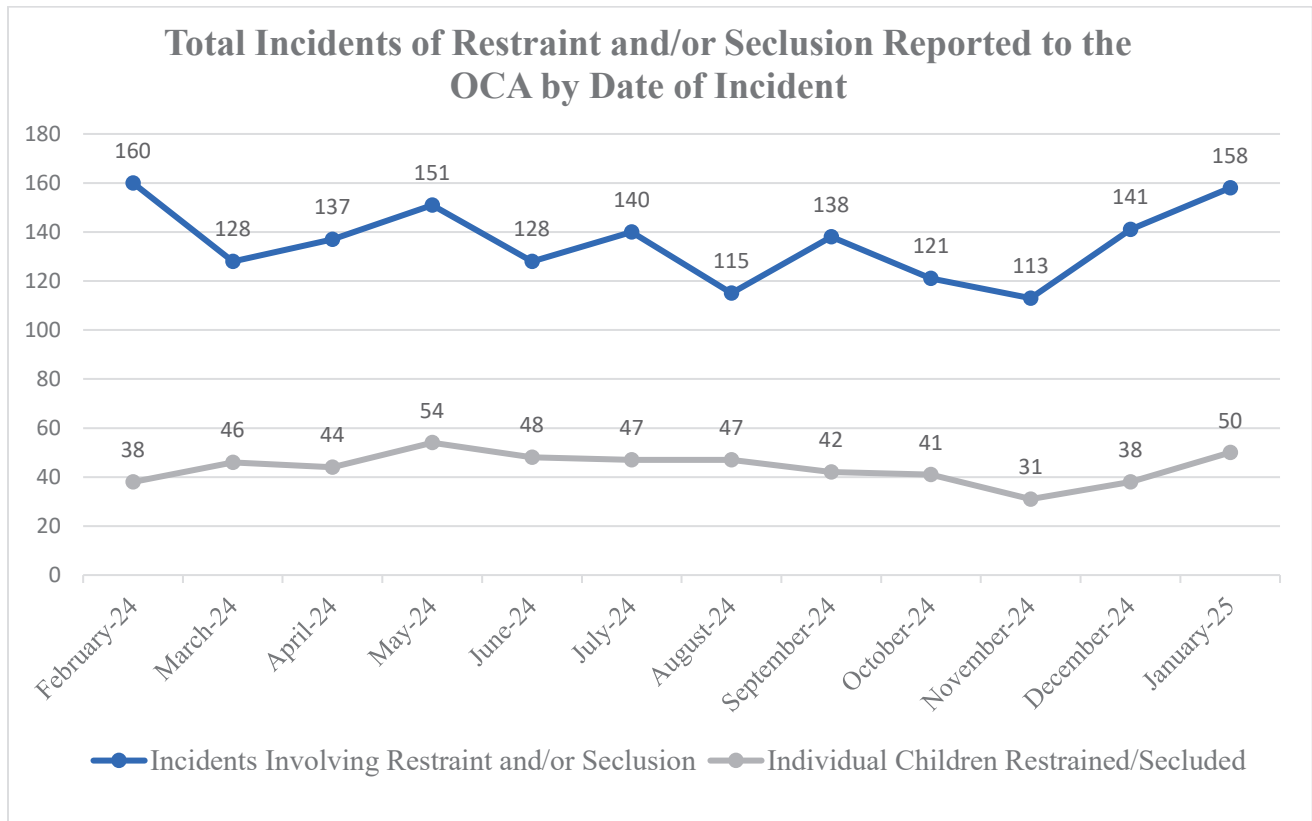
**Group Care (Group Home or Institution) Locations:**

Location	Total Children	%	Children Outside New England
New Hampshire:	225	78%	Alabama 1
New England (Outside NH):	52	19%	Arkansas 1
Outside of New England:	8	3%	Florida 5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>285</b>		Louisiana 1
			<b>Total: 8</b>



**Restraints & Seclusion Incidents Reported to the OCA from Residential Facilities**  
Rolling 12 Month: 02/01/24 – 01/31/25

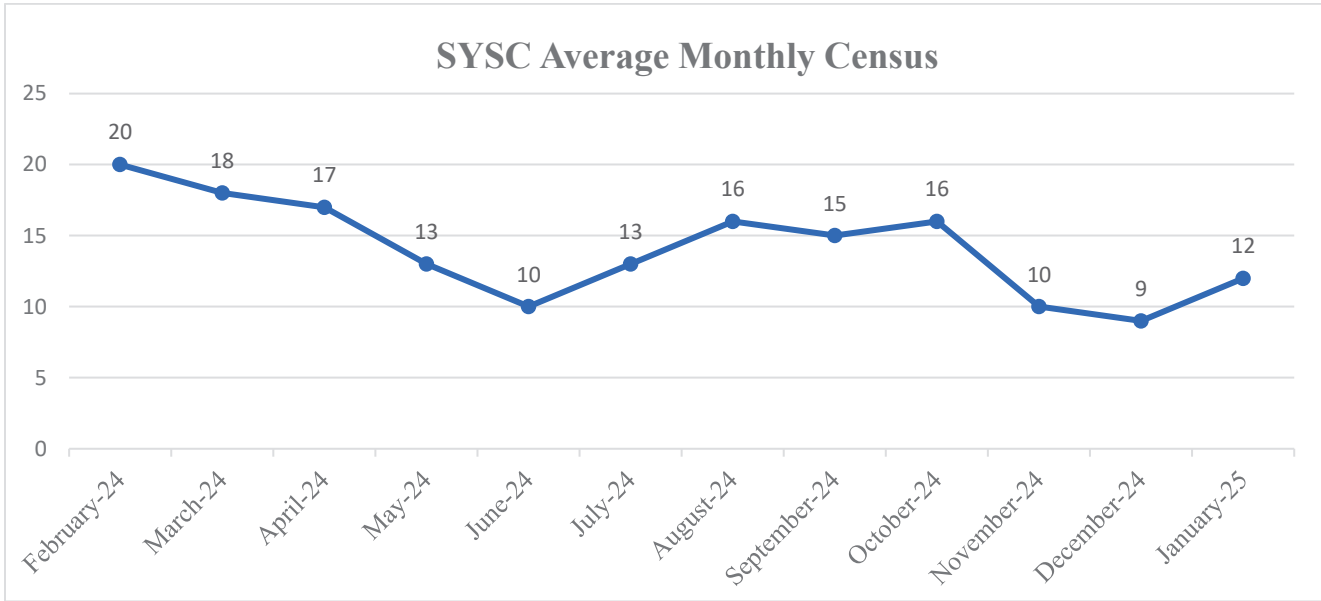
Month	Incidents Reported to OCA Involving:			Total Incidents	Number of Children
	Restraints	Seclusions	Restraints & Seclusions		
February-24	142	5	13	160	38
March-24	108	7	13	128	46
April-24	130	2	5	137	44
May-24	142	4	5	151	54
June-24	118	5	5	128	48
July-24	130	3	7	140	47
August-24	102	7	6	115	47
September-24	115	7	16	138	42
October-24	106	5	10	121	41
November-24	103	2	8	113	31
December-24	132	3	6	141	38
January-25	144	3	11	158	50
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1472</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1630</b>	



**Restraint & Seclusion Explanation**

- This data includes all residential facilities which the OCA receives restraint and seclusion reports from.
- The OCA only receives restraint and seclusion reports from contracted facilities; we do not receive them for certified-only facilities, including many of the out-of-state facilities beyond the New England region.

**SYSC Incidents Reported to the OCA**  
Rolling 12 Month: 12/01/23 – 11/30/24

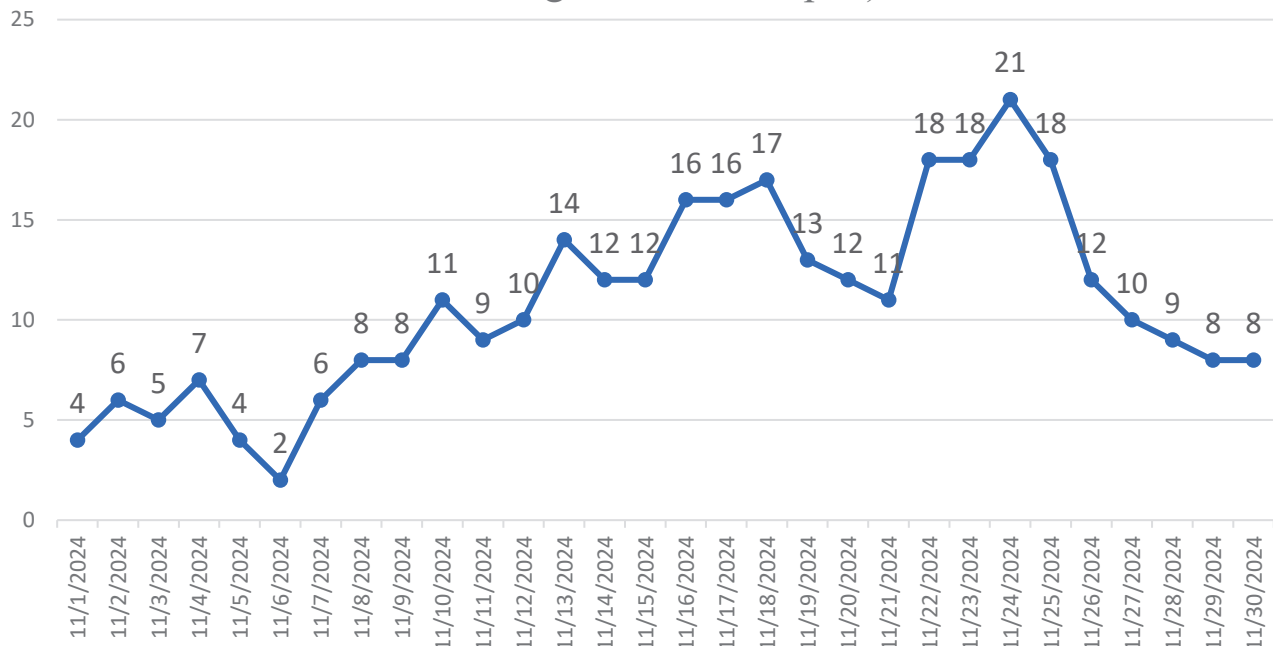


Month	Major Incidents	Mod Incidents	Minor Incidents	Other Incidents	Total
February-24	56	13	9	26	104
March-24	39	16	4	24	83
April-24	55	30	8	9	102
May-24	57	18	7	18	100
June-24	22	4	1	7	34
July-24	45	9	2	13	69
August-24	56	27	5	22	110
September-24	36	30	3	42	111
October-24	41	21	3	23	88
November-24	29	24	1	8	62
December-24	3	14	3	6	26
January-25	33	23	4	25	85
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>974</b>

**SYSC Incidents Involving Restraints or Seclusions by Month**  
12/01/23 – 11/30/24

Month	Incidents Inv. Restraint or Seclusion	Individual Children
February-24	13	7
March-24	5	4
April-24	10	7
May-24	13	6
June-24	10	9
July-24	24	8
August-24	18	10
September-24	13	6
October-24	11	4
November-24	9	3
December-24	3	3
January-25	15	6
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>144</b>	

### Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Waitlist for Minors November 2024 (Children who have been accepted but are waiting for a bed to open)



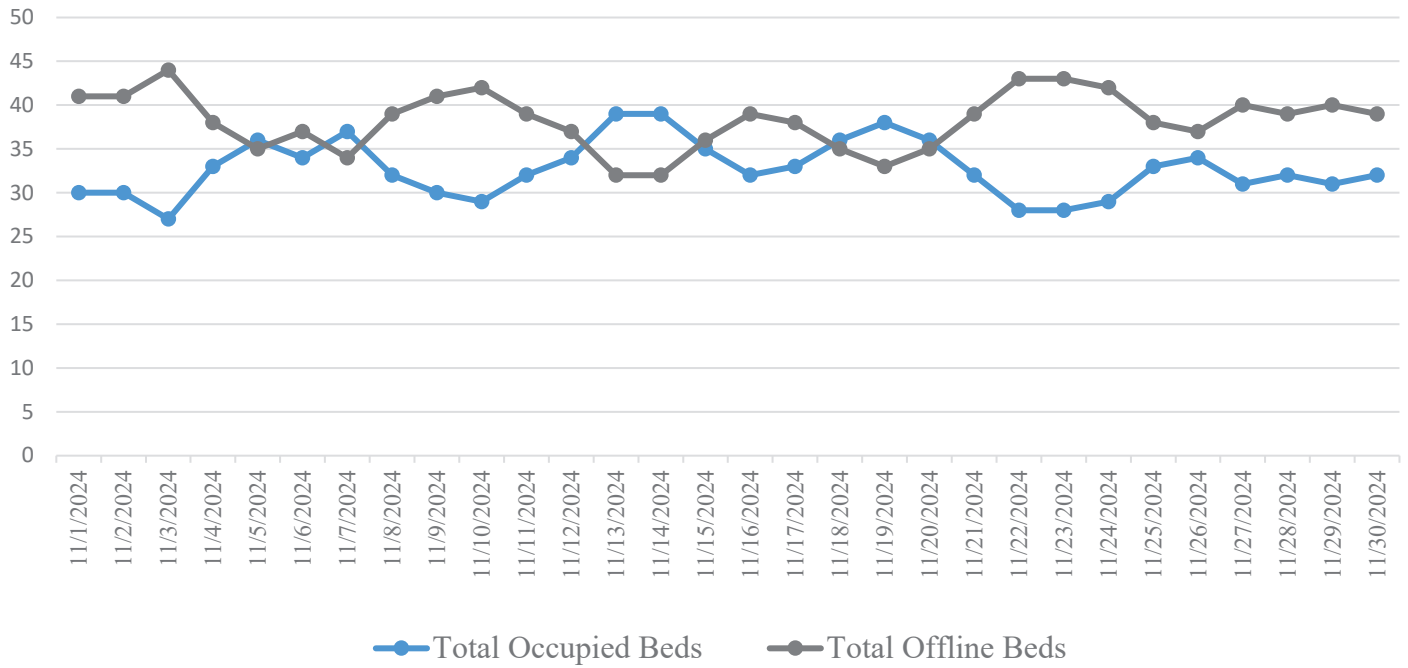
Data Source: Hampstead Hospital

November 2024 Inpatient (HHRTF) Disposition Data for Hampstead Hospital (Minors)			
Data source: Hampstead Hospital			
Disposition	# of Dispositions	% of Total Dispositions	% of Accepted Dispositions
<b>Total Dispositions in September:</b>	<b>133</b>		
<b>Not Accepted</b> (went home before acceptance, placed elsewhere before acceptance, deferred/denied)	<b>21</b>	16%	
<b>Accepted:</b>	<b>112</b>	84%	
Accepted but went home before a bed opened	<b>26</b>	20%	23%
Accepted but placed elsewhere before a bed opened	<b>17</b>	13%	15%
Admitted	<b>69</b>	52%	62%

#### Hampstead Hospital & East Acres Explanation

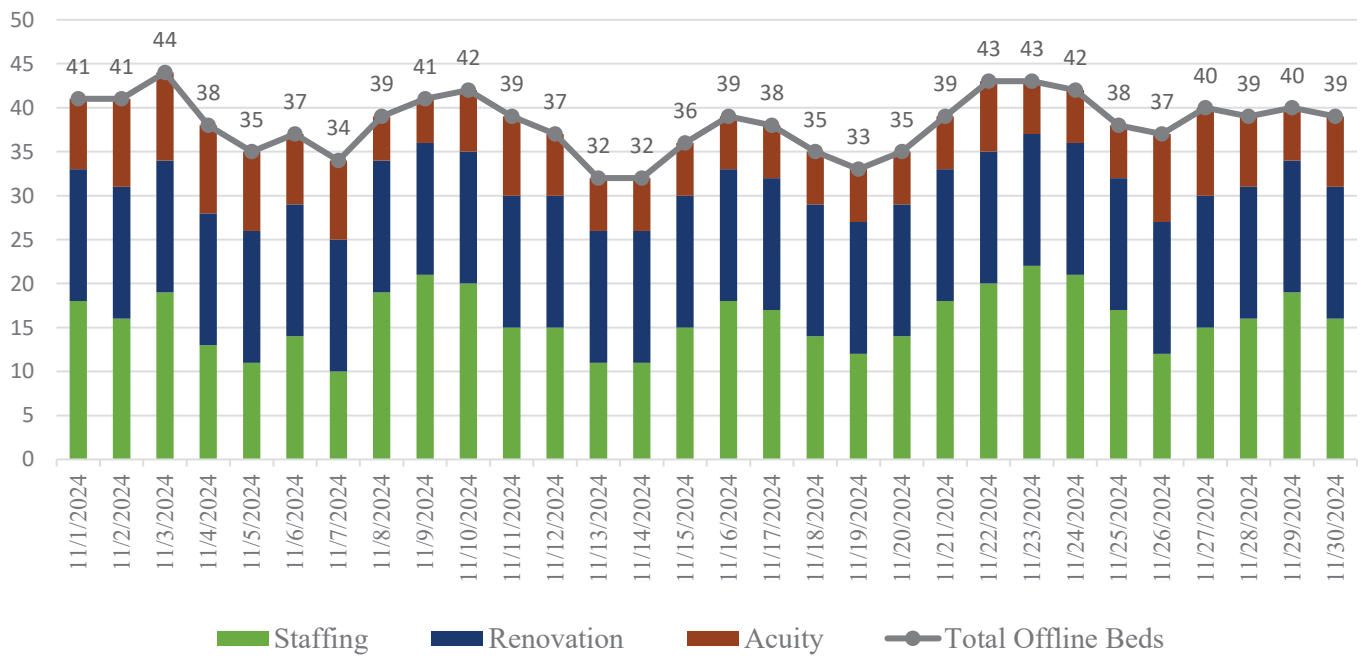
- Above is a graph with Hampstead Hospital waitlist data that is shared publicly by DHHS (for DHHS data, see: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/about-dhhs/locations-facilities/state-run-and-designated-acute-psychiatric-bed-data>).
- Below you will see new graphs focusing on the number of occupied and offline beds. The 3 reasons for beds being offline as provided by Hampstead Hospital are staffing, renovation, and acuity.

## Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Occupied & Offline Beds November 2024



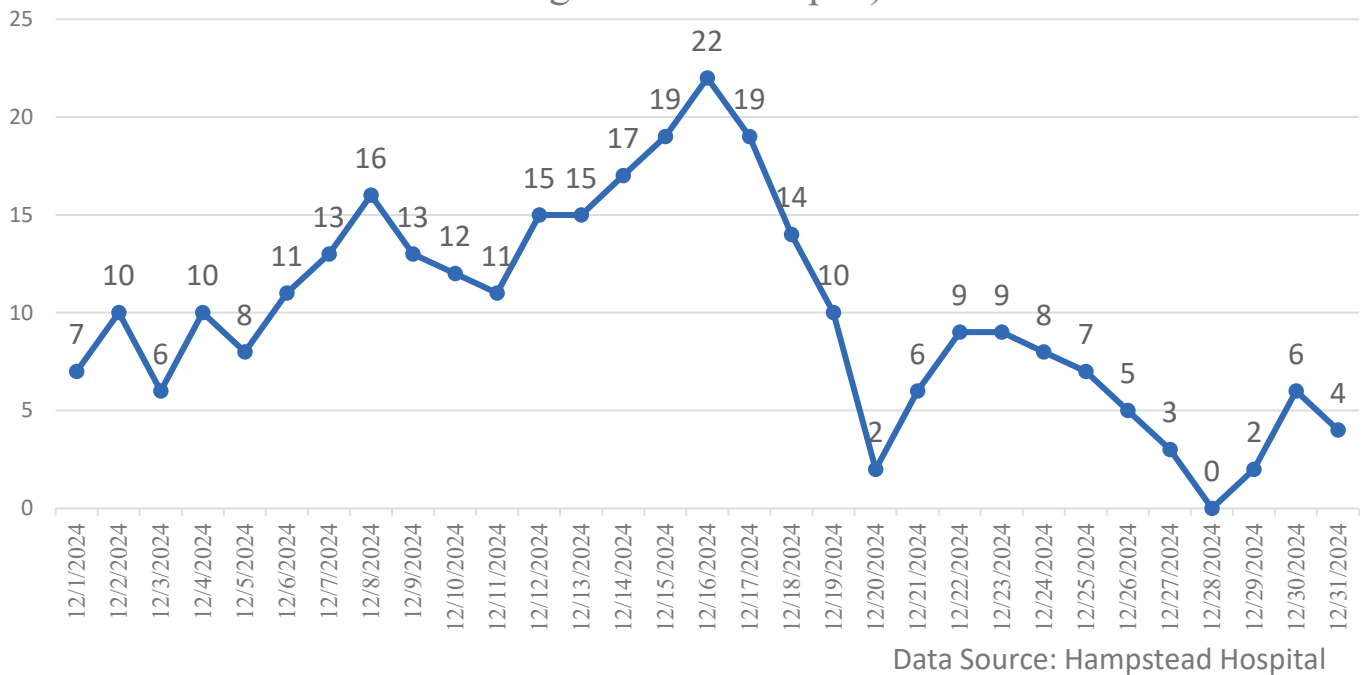
Data Source: Hampstead Hospital

## Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Offline Beds November 2024



Data Source: Hampstead Hospital

### Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Waitlist for Minors December 2024 (Children who have been accepted but are waiting for a bed to open)

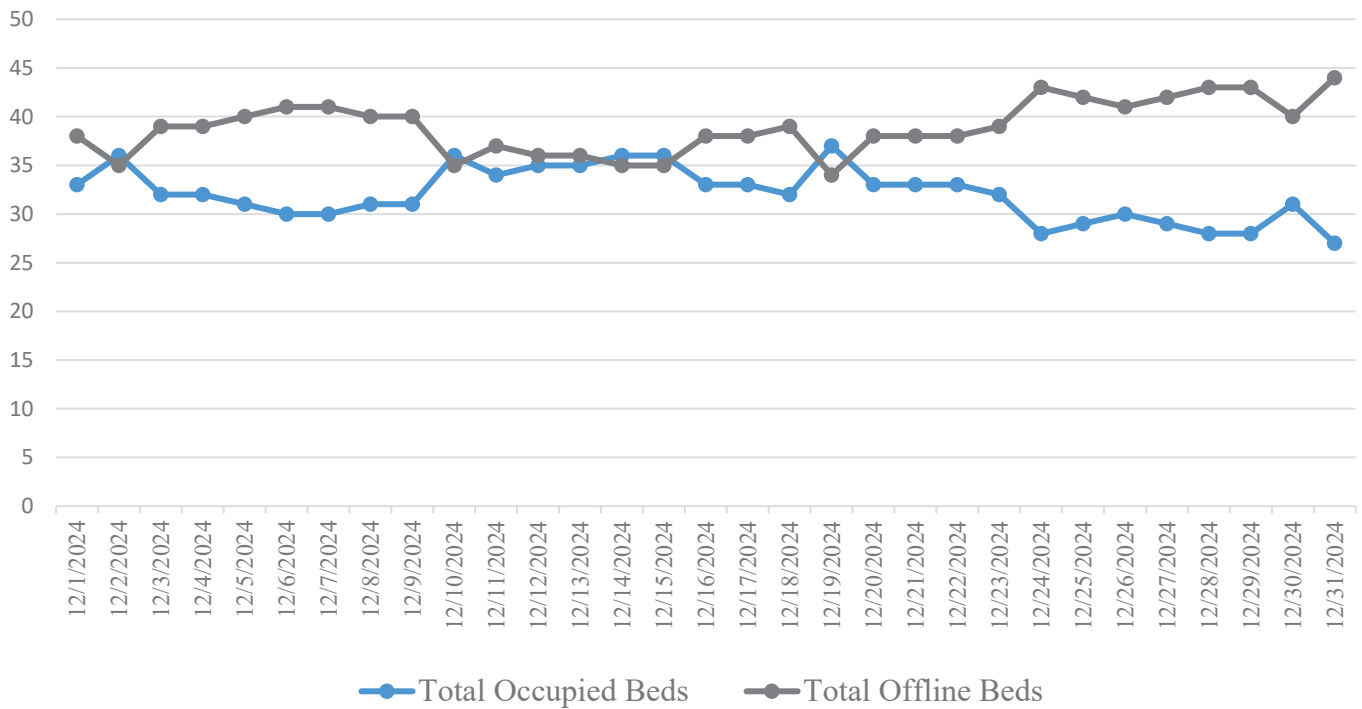


December 2024 Inpatient (HHRTF) Disposition Data for Hampstead Hospital (Minors)			
Data source: Hampstead Hospital			
Disposition	# of Dispositions	% of Total Dispositions	% of Accepted Dispositions
<b>Total Dispositions in September:</b>	<b>128</b>		
<b>Not Accepted</b> (went home before acceptance, placed elsewhere before acceptance, deferred/denied)	<b>25</b>	20%	
<b>Accepted:</b>	<b>103</b>	80%	
Accepted but went home before a bed opened	<b>16</b>	13%	16%
Accepted but placed elsewhere before a bed opened	<b>19</b>	15%	18%
Admitted	<b>68</b>	53%	66%

#### Hampstead Hospital & East Acres Explanation

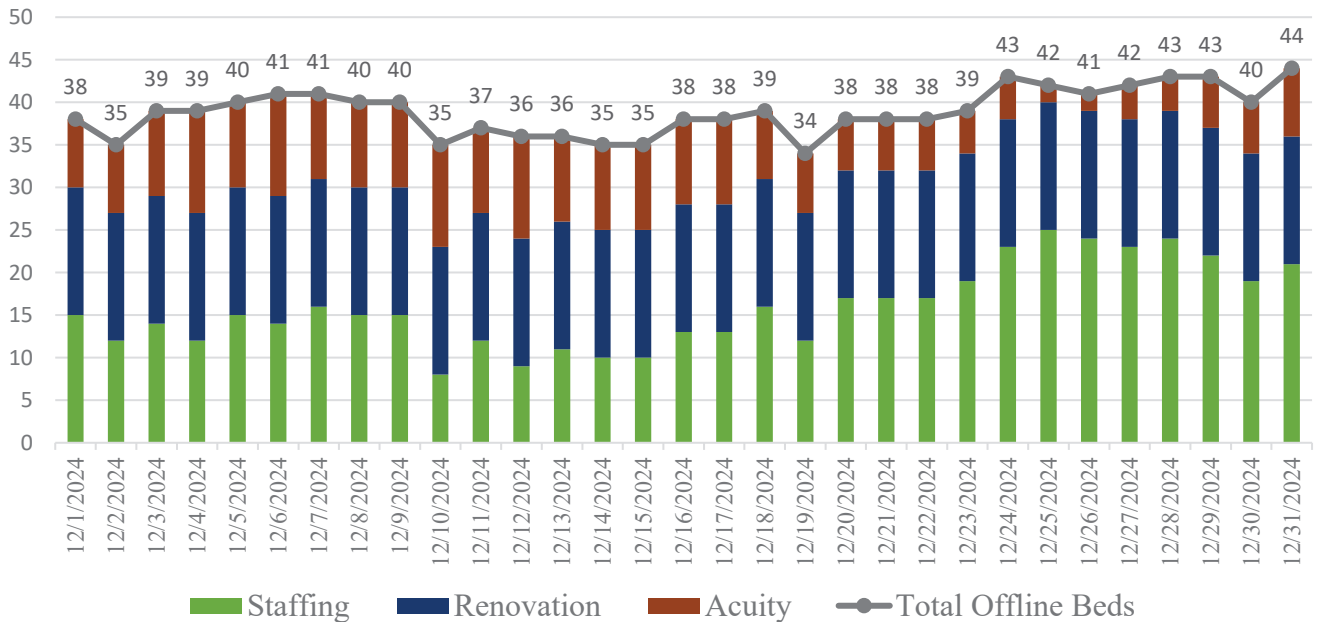
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### Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Occupied & Offline Beds December 2024



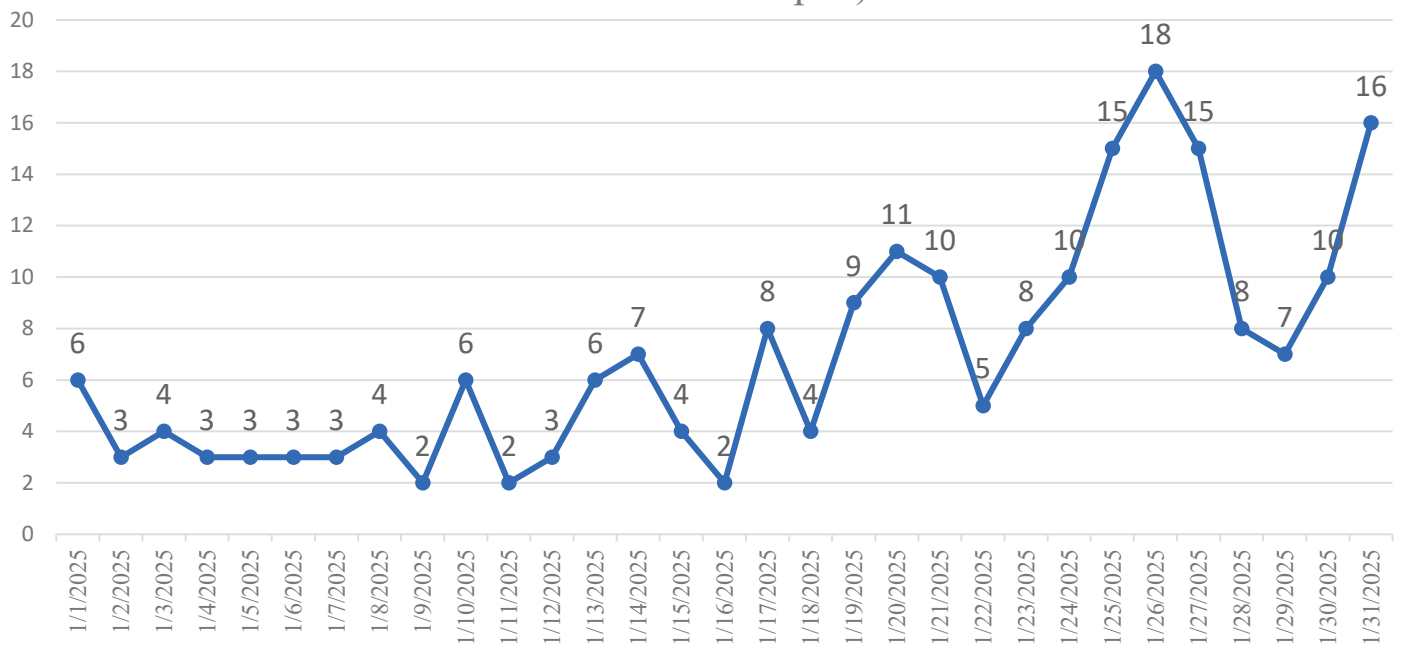
Data Source: Hampstead Hospital

### Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Offline Beds December 2024



Data Source: Hampstead Hospital

### Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Waitlist for Minors January 2025 (Children who have been accepted but are waiting for a bed to open)



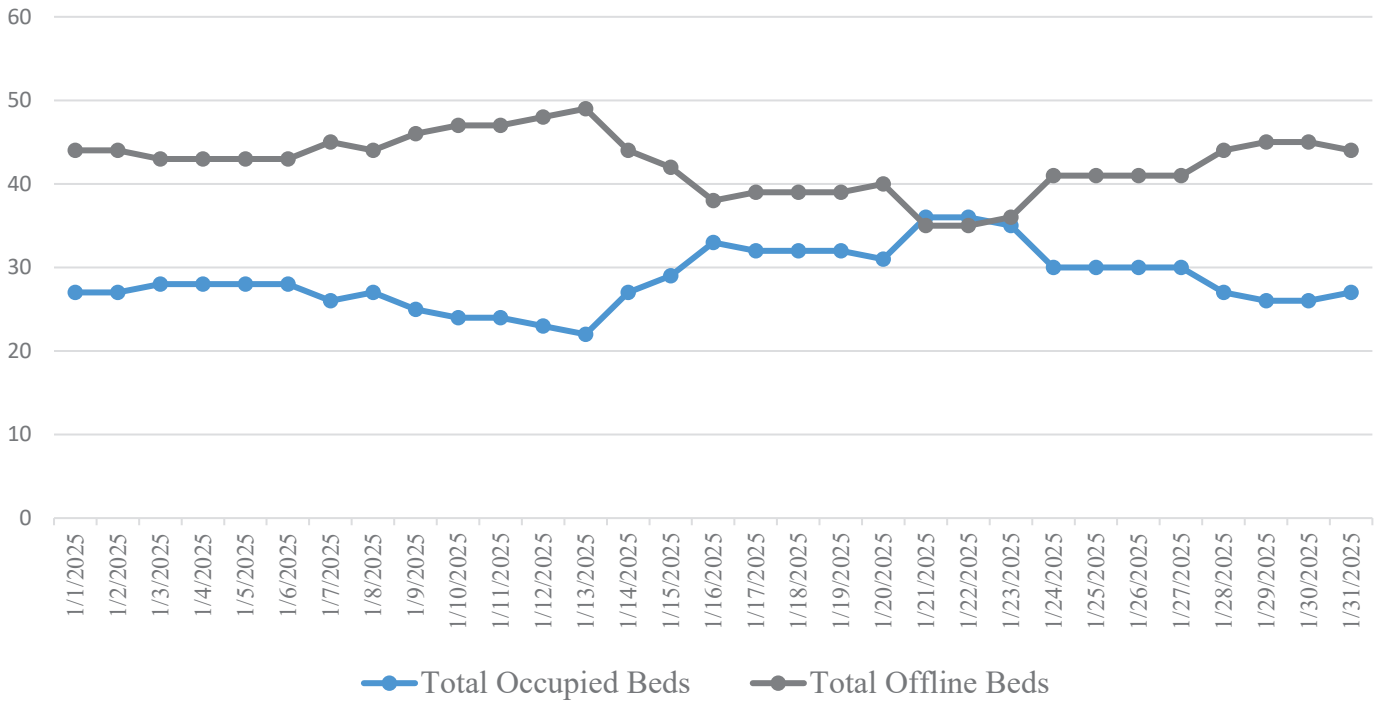
Data Source: Hampstead Hospital

<b>January 2025 Inpatient (HHRTF) Disposition Data for Hampstead Hospital (Minors)</b>			
Data source: Hampstead Hospital			
Disposition	# of Dispositions	% of Total Dispositions	% of Accepted Dispositions
<b>Total Dispositions in September:</b>	<b>114</b>		
<b>Not Accepted</b> (went home before acceptance, placed elsewhere before acceptance, deferred/denied)	<b>20</b>	18%	
<b>Accepted:</b>	<b>94</b>	82%	
Accepted but went home before a bed opened	<b>15</b>	13%	16%
Accepted but placed elsewhere before a bed opened	<b>16</b>	14%	17%
Admitted	<b>63</b>	55%	67%

#### Hampstead Hospital & East Acres Explanation

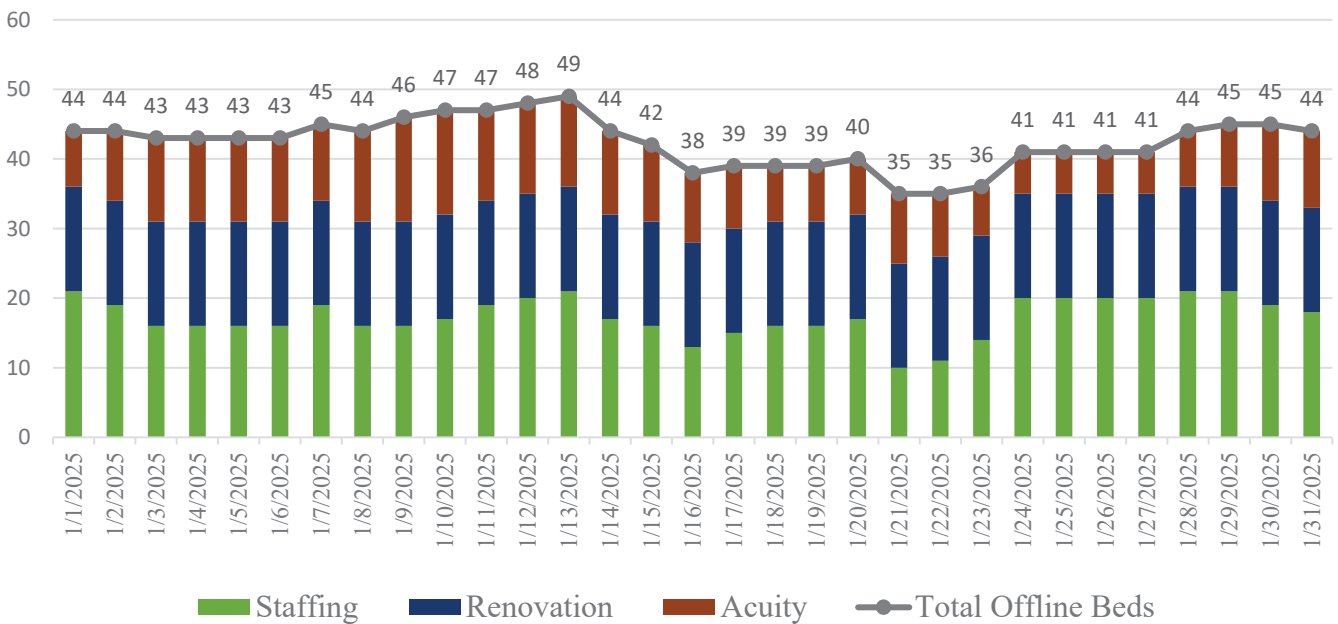
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### Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Occupied & Offline Beds January 2025



Data Source: Hampstead Hospital

### Hampstead Hospital Inpatient HHRTF Offline Beds January 2025



Data Source: Hampstead Hospital